

F

FIVE YEARS IN CANADA

BY

W. M. ELKINGTON

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TO
HENRY H. HAYWARD, Esq., J.P.,
IN TOKEN OF ESTEEM
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED
BY
THE AUTHOR.

P R E F A C E.

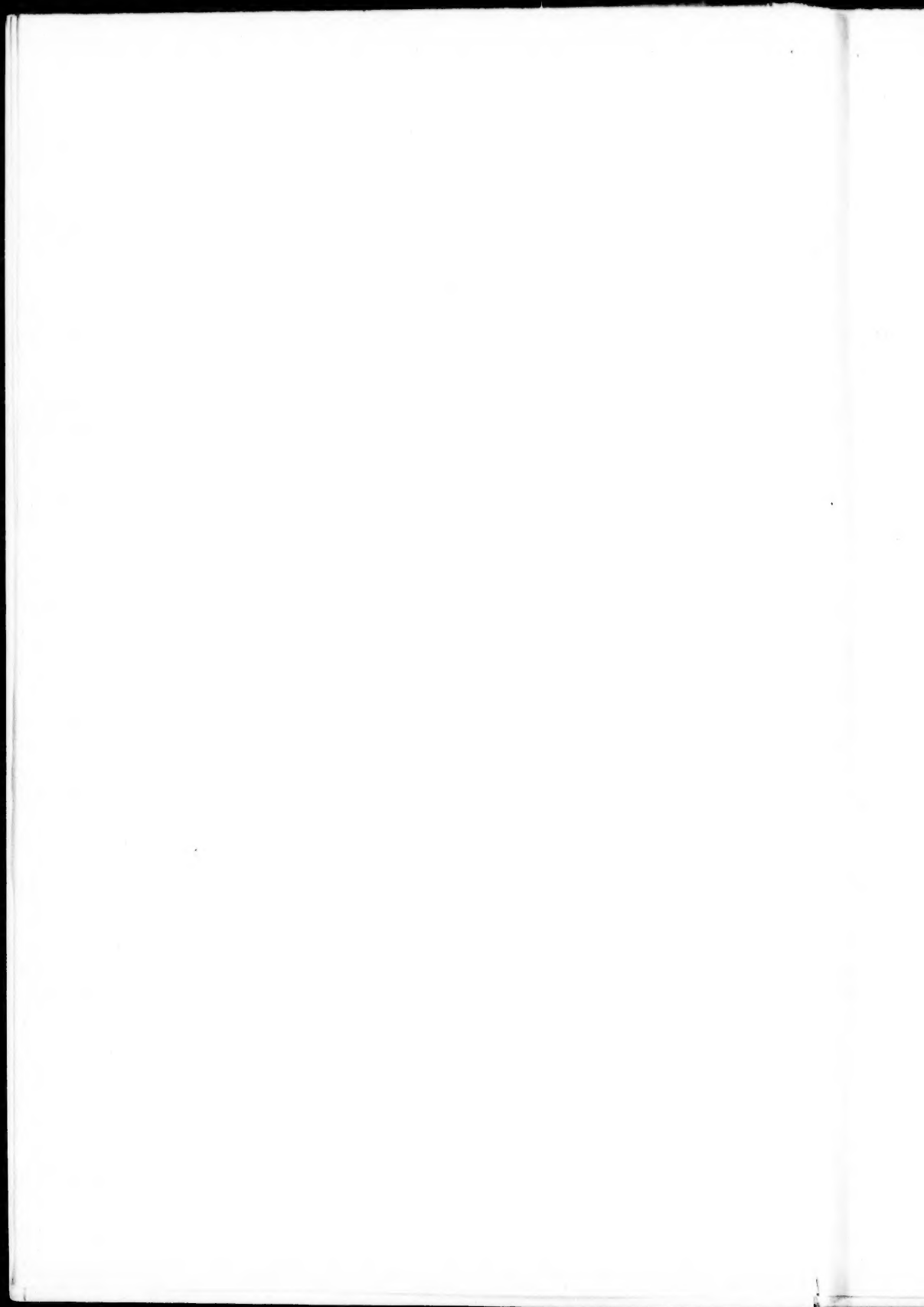
In laying this little work before the public, I must ask their kind indulgence in respect of the many shortcomings which it contains. What I have written here are plain facts; I have endeavoured to trace out the incidents connected with my sojourn in Canada, and in doing so it has been my wish to point out, not only the advantages, but the disadvantages pertaining to the life of a settler in the Great North West. The facts narrated here are but the everyday life of an emigrant; they are things that have happened to me, and that are likely to happen to every young man who may leave his home in England to try his fortune "out West."

I have also endeavoured to show in its true form the position of a man who has emigrated with a family; and also, in my picture of ranche life, to show what may be done with capital and energy.

By the statistics given at the end of this book I hope to have shown what is to be gained by the different classes of emigrants; and now, in order to give more insight into the everyday life, I must request the reader's tolerance in accompanying me through a period of five years in Canada.

W. M. E.

RUGBY, February, 1895.



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FIVE YEARS IN CANADA.

CHAPTER I.

Leave England—S.S. "Corean"—Comforts and Discomforts—Moville—The Voyage—Halifax—Intercolonial Railway—Quebec—Ottawa—The Journey—Lake Superior—The Bush—The Prairie Province—Winnipeg—Portage la Prairie—Strathelair—A Manitoba Farm.

On the 11th of April, 1889, I sailed from Liverpool on board the Allan Line steamship "Corean" for Halifax and Portland. It was somewhat of a relief after the bustle of the landing-stage to get on board and look round our new quarters. We were rather disappointed with the vessel; we had expected to find elaborate state-rooms and cabins, but it turned out that she was only a cattle-boat fitted up for emigrants for the occasion; however, we got our things down into the cabin and tried to look cheerful. There were four bunks, two above and two below, and a stand with a jug and basin, leaving just enough room in the place for one man to stand upright; along one side of the cabin ran a stream of bilge water, and in the roof was a ventilator connected with the cook's galley, from which we caught frequent whiffs of boiled cabbages, salt pork, &c.; these little inconveniences no doubt had a great deal to do with our subsequent sickness. About five o'clock in the evening we started down

the Mersey, but very few stayed on deck to watch the receding shores, as the tea-bell had just rung, and all were anxious to make a good meal while we were yet in smooth water. Coming on deck an hour later, very little was to be seen of the coast, and as the evening closed in we lost sight of England.

There was no first cabin on the "Corean," and we in the second cabin had the best part of the deck; the steerage passengers were berthed forward, and being mostly composed of Scandinavians, Swedes, and Russian Jews, were kept entirely to themselves. The first night we went to bed in our narrow little bunks expecting to be up early next morning to see the coast of Ireland; the sea was calm and we were all fairly comfortable; but when the morning broke the ship was rolling badly, and I soon began to feel queer in the stuffy little cabin, so I managed to get some clothes on, and scrambled on deck in time to save myself from an attack of sickness. A cold wind was blowing from the north, and the ship was rolling on the bit of a sea; the coast of Ireland lay about two miles to leeward, and several small steamers and sailing vessels passed between us and the land. Very few passengers were on deck, and the breakfast table did not tempt more than a dozen persons. About noon the ship's head was turned to the land, and we entered Lough Foyle, where the mails and passengers from Londonderry awaited us; several other vessels were in at the same time, anchored off the picturesque little village of Moville. Over a hundred passengers came on board here, making the number up to about eight hundred; everyone who had been ill began to feel right again now in the smooth water of the Lough, and when the ship started again, we were all in the best of

spirits. An open-air concert was started on deck, but as we left the coast of Ireland and came out upon the waves of the broad Atlantic, the passengers gradually went below, some not to come up again till the end of the voyage, for when I woke next morning the ship was pitching and rolling in a dreadful manner; to get up I found was impossible, for no sooner had I lifted my head than I was seized with sickness, which lasted for three days, during which time I touched no food and drank very little. One of the other occupants of our cabin was just as bad, but the other two did not suffer so much. The steward came in with the soothing intelligence that we had encountered a gale, and that no one was allowed on deck—not that we wished to go; he told us there were only three second cabin passengers who were not sick, and these did not enjoy themselves much while the gale lasted. On the fourth morning I began to feel a little more cheerful, and with the help of the steward managed to get on deck, where I soon recovered, and spent the time between meals in chewing ship's-biscuit; most of the other passengers began to get right now, and a concert was arranged to be held in the dining saloon that night. The sea had gone down a lot, though it still showed signs of the gale that had passed. But we soon got used to the motion of the vessel, and nearly everyone turned up to the concert, which went off very well. The next few days passed very quietly; sometimes a school of porpoises would follow the ship; now and again a whale or another ship was sighted, but on the whole the scenery was very monotonous. One night a vessel passed us at a distance of three or four miles, and we were treated to a display of signalling by rockets, which looked very well on the water. Some of the days were very fine and warm, but as we got nearer to the other side we began

to feel the difference in the climate. In crossing the bank of Newfoundland we encountered the usual heavy fogs, and had to keep the fog-horn going regularly till we got clear of it.

We were now on the look out for land, and about noon on Easter Sunday it was sighted ahead; a few hours, and we rapidly came up to it. The forest-lined shores seemed to have no opening, but as we got nearer we saw a narrow channel, and steaming through this, found ourselves in the harbour of Halifax, Nova Scotia.

It was rather late when we got off the ship; the baggage took so long to get off and be passed by the Customs officers, who do not as a rule trouble emigrants to unfasten their boxes.

About midnight a train drew up alongside, and we got on board and made ourselves comfortable. The cars were well fitted, with rows of seats up each side, leaving a walk up the middle, along which people might go the whole length of the train; the seats pull down and make a flat place to sleep on, and in the Colonist Sleeping Cars there is a shelf up above which pulls down and makes a bed.

We had not been in the car long before we fell asleep, and on waking up, found ourselves amongst some of the wildest scenery imaginable— forests of pine and other trees, broken now and again by a small lake among the rocks, and in some places a few log huts used by lumberers. No attempt had been made at cultivating this part; indeed it would be impossible, as it is almost solid rock. As we got further on, however, the land got better, and in some places settlements had sprung up. We stopped at a place

called Truro for dinner, and after leaving there came upon a different kind of country altogether; good-sized towns and villages were plentiful, and we passed many farms which looked as well as English ones. In some places the line ran down a very steep descent; the train rocked and swayed as if it was going off the line, until it suddenly pulled up with a bump at some wayside station.

It took us two days to get to Point Levis, opposite Quebec, where we left the Intercolonial Railroad, on which we had travelled from Halifax, and crossed the St. Lawrence on a ferry-boat to Quebec, and there boarded the Canadian Pacific Railroad cars. There was a great deal of crushing until we got to another station, where they put on extra cars, and in a few hours' time we arrived at Ottawa, the capital of the Dominion.

The train stayed half an hour to enable us to get some dinner, and after leaving the city ran alongside the Ottawa River for some distance. All along the stream were mills, lumber camps and piles of timber; we had left the farming country behind again, and stations were few and far between. At meal times we stopped at a small town, and once the engine broke down, delaying us for a few hours, when we walked on to the next station and strolled through the woods. We bought a good deal of our food and cooked it on the stove in the car, but we found this hardly worth the trouble, when we could get a good meal at one of the stations for from twenty-five to forty cents.

At Sudbury Junction many passengers left the train to go down to the Lake Huron district. From this place the country got wilder and wilder; nothing was to be seen but

huge rocks and trees, with small lakes and rivers, full of fish, trout and pike. A great many bears and other animals are shot about here, it being considered one of the best places for sport in the country.

Soon after leaving Sudbury the train was signalled to stop, and on getting out to inquire the cause we found the track had slipped and left a great hole in front of us; it took some time to put this right and get the rails laid again, and it was not until next morning that we got a view of Lake Superior at a spot called Jackfish Bay. The ice had not all melted round the shores, but far out we could see the white-caps of the waves.

The line ran through rocky tunnels and over high trestles hundreds of feet above the ground, which swayed to and fro as the train ran over them. They are built entirely of wood, very few bolts being used, and though they look slender, are really very strong and substantial; at intervals along the bridge are placed barrels of water, to be used in case of fire.

In a short time we arrived at Port Arthur, situated at the head of Lake Superior, from which point the steamers start for Owen Sound and American ports; it is only a small town, but is an important place for wheat shipping. Fort William, at the mouth of the Kaministiquia River, two or three miles further on, is another place from which a great deal of Manitoba No. 1 Hard, as the best wheat is called, is shipped. We now left the Lake altogether, and passed through another barren tract of country till we came to Rat Portage, on the Lake of the Woods. Mining is carried on here, and a good deal of silver and some gold has been found.

A few hours after leaving Rat Portage the bush began to get thinner, till at last we came out into the prairie province of Manitoba. As far as the eye can reach is one vast plain dotted with the white houses of the settlers: we passed a good many of these prosperous-looking farms, where the people were seeding, and after running through a few small stations, saw on the horizon signs of a large town, and in a short time arrived at the city of Winnipeg, the capital of Manitoba. This town, formerly called Fort Garry, is situated at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers; thirty years ago it consisted of a few small shanties; now it has a population of 30,000, and is one of the rising cities of the Western Continent.

After an hour's stay we resumed our journey westward, and after a fifty-mile run came to Portage la Prairie, where the Manitoba and North-Western joins the Canadian Pacific, and as I had booked to Strathclair Station on the former railroad, I had to change cars. We left Portage la Prairie about 4.0 p.m., and what little light was left enabled us to see the beautiful and fertile country through which we were passing.

I tried to keep awake, lest I should be carried beyond my destination, but as all the other passengers dozed off, I could not resist the temptation, and very soon followed their example. It must have been about midnight when I was awoke by someone shouting in my ear, "Where are you bound for?" I told him, and at once the conductor took hold of me by the coat collar, whilst another man got my baggage, and together we were pitched out on to the platform, just as the train moved on. When I had collected my scattered senses and baggage, I made for a

small shed used as a booking office, and asked for Mr. T—, to whom I had come out to “learn farming.” He was there waiting for me, and I wondered at the time how he had managed to guess the train I should arrive by; but I ceased to wonder when I subsequently learnt that there was only one train a day each way.

I shall not soon forget my first ride in a Canadian wagon and the jolting I got; there are no springs except to the seat, and they are not of much use when the wagon goes through a badger hole or over a stone. A drive of two miles brought us to the house, like most in the neighbourhood, built of logs, and, in order to give it a neater appearance, lined inside with lumber; a large stove stood in the centre of the room, and altogether the place looked quite cheerful. I was very tired after the long journey, and that night did not mind the hardness of the straw mattress, nor the want of chairs and furniture in my little room, which was upstairs in the gable of the roof, and was reached by a ladder.



CHAPTER II.

The Buildings - Seeding - Duck Shooting - Cutting Rails - Fencing - Mosquitoes -
A Frost - Salt Lakes - The Crops - Neighbours - Breaking - A Cyclone -
Dominion Day - Summer-fallowing - Haying - Hudson Bay Company -
Indian Reserve - Buying a Pony - An Arrival - Harvesting - Fireguards -
Ploughing - Preparations for a Journey.

When I got up next morning I found Mr. T— already busy ploughing: he was using what is called a “sulky,” or riding plough: some of these have two or even three mouldboards, and so, where horses can be got fit to handle them, are much more popular than the ordinary walking plough.

I took a look round the buildings, which were of the usual kind, rough log walls and straw roofs, and, being anxious to start work, I was set to clean the stables out and look after the horses and cattle. Seeding, I found, was nearly finished, and by the middle of May was a thing of the past, the season being one of the earliest on record. The farm itself consisted of 320 acres, about 80 acres only of which was cultivated and fenced in, the rest being open to the prairie, whilst on one part was a small lake of 20 acres, which at that time of the year was covered with wild ducks: at night, after the work was finished, I sometimes went down with my gun to try and shoot next day's dinner: at first I wasted a great many cartridges, and the ducks didn't seem to mind me, but after some practice I could generally manage to get a good bag.

When seeding was over, we went one day to the bush to get a load of stakes for fencing, and as I could not handle an axe (I had already broken two axe-handles in my attempts at splitting firewood), I had to drag the trees out to the wagon, which I found to be rather heavy work, and, together with the heat, counter-balanced the novelty of the situation, and when the day's work was over and we were riding home on the load, I had made up my mind that "farming in Manitoba" was not all sugar and plums, and that "hard work" was much harder than I had anticipated.

We next set to work to do some fencing. Two stakes are stuck in the ground about six or eight inches apart; between these are put the rails, and then the stakes are kept together by binding them round with willow bands or withes.

About this time the mosquitoes were beginning to make their appearance, and at the same time the wheat was coming up nicely, when one morning we found there had been four degrees of frost in the night, which had cut down the wheat and killed all the mosquitoes. These frosts generally come if the spring has been early, as it was that year: one benefit we derived from it was that we were not troubled with mosquitoes again that year, for which we could not be too thankful, for in the short time they had been with us they had given us a foretaste of what was to come when the season grew older.

We got our mail every day at the station, one of us having to go in for it, which was generally an evening job. The town, as it was called, consisted of ten or twelve houses, three of them being stores, one a saloon, one a blacksmith's

shop, and the rest "private houses," all built of lumber. (This description refers to the year 1889; from latest accounts I hear that the place has changed beyond recognition).

About two miles from our place was an alkali lake, where we often went for a swim, and to get a few ducks and geese, with which the place swarmed. These alkali or salt lakes are very numerous in that part of the country, and in some places, owing to the continued dry summers, have been completely dried up, leaving the salt thick upon the ground like a layer of snow; needless to say, these salt patches were the favourite resort of the cattle, which, on being turned out after milking in the morning, generally made for one of these places to spend the day, until one of us rode out to herd them up and shut them in a corral, or fenced enclosure, for the night. The working horses were stabled, but the others (about a dozen mares and colts) ran out from one year's end to another.

We had had no rain for some time, and the ground was getting dry and hard, and the wheat, which was recovering from the effects of the frost, began to turn yellow; some days were intensely hot, the thermometer registering one hundred and six degrees in the shade; we could not even fetch a bucket of cold water from the well but it was tepid before we could reach the house.

On Sundays a Presbyterian Church Service was held in a small wooden building at the station, to which most of the people in the district went. We had several neighbours, the nearest being an Englishman, whose house was a little over a quarter of a mile away. In the hot weather

very little meat is eaten, for several reasons, the chief being that it could not be kept fresh many hours, and so bread and butter and vegetables formed our staple food.

After the fencing and other work about the buildings had been finished, we set to work to "break" a piece of land. Mr. T— started with his "sulky" plough, whilst I picked out the stones and stacked them in heaps—very heavy work in hot weather, which necessitated frequent trips to the lake, which was close by, to refresh ourselves with a draught of its, to say the least, unpleasant water; but in these cases one must not be too particular. When we had done about fifteen acres, Mr. T— started me to do the rest with a small walking plough and two horses; it was the first time I had held a plough, so I had quite a job to keep it straight at first, but after a time I got into the way of it, and did about ten acres. One day, whilst I was ploughing, I saw on the horizon to the north a cloud of dust, and a few minutes after a terrific wind struck us, upset the plough and myself and made the horses stagger; when it had passed over it began to lighten, and seeing a signal from the house, I went in, just in time to escape a heavy thunderstorm. This rain did some good to the crops, but it had come too late to ensure a good season. The grass and herbage was as dry as a bone, and we frequently saw prairie and bush fires in the distance.

It was now about the beginning of July, and on the 1st of that month, being Dominion Day, a pic-nic was held at a place called Newdale, eight miles east of us, to which were attracted most of the settlers and all the Indians within a fifty miles radius, for whom horse and foot races had been arranged.

Soon after this we started to summer-fallow; some of the ground that had been sown was in such a bad state that we ploughed it up to ensure a good crop next year, and altogether did about forty acres. Some of the neighbouring farmers had even worse crops than ours, some fields being covered with weeds, with here and there a head of wheat standing out. The hay, which grew wild in the hollows of the prairie, was very short, and what there was of it got eaten up by the cattle, so that the only people who got any hay were those who had some inside their fence, which we were lucky enough to have.

We started to cut it about the end of July: it needed none of the care and trouble which hay requires in England; it was cut in the morning, raked up at noon, and carried straight away. It was very warm work stacking it, and we were not sorry when it was done. A rack for carrying hay is made of light thin poles, in the form of a cage, and fixed on to the wagon.

After this we had very little to do but herd the cattle, so one day we drove to the Hudson Bay Post, seven miles north; after covering half that distance we came to the Little Saskatchewan River, which runs between very steep hills, and which at this point makes a sharp bend from south-west to north, and gives the name to the little village that has sprung up—Big Bend. The road runs along the valley, passing a fair-sized sawmill, till it comes to the Post.

This is a large lumber building, and to it the Indians come from all parts to trade their skins for merchandise. The ground floor was stocked with goods, and several Indians were bargaining with the factors for blankets, &c.

Upstairs the floor and walls were covered with the skins that had been brought in; all kinds of furs were there, some of the most valuable varieties, and altogether worth thousands of dollars. Whilst we were there an Indian brought in four black bear skins, which he had trapped or shot, and for which they gave him fifty dollars in trade. It seemed to be an unusual sum for him, for he bought some of the gaudiest blankets and ribbons in the store, and went out to show himself off to his squaw. There was one fellow there who had some ponies to sell, so I went with him to his place, accompanied by one of the factors to interpret; he lived on the reservation, a tract several miles in extent, which is set apart exclusively for Indians; his shack, as the huts are called, was made of logs, plastered and roofed with mud, but this is only for winter use, the summer residence being a tepee, or wigwam, which stood near. He got his ponies into the corral, and we picked out one, which he lassoed, and for which I gave him the sum of forty dollars; it was a mare with a colt, which was thrown into the bargain. It was a regular Indian mustang and had not been broken, and the consequence was that when I tried to ride it home, I found I had taken on a big job, but we let her gallop till she was tired, and then she gave us less trouble, though she would occasionally stick her feet in the ground and refuse to move an inch, when suddenly she would spring into the air, and do her best to get rid of the burden on her back. However, we got her home all right, and hobbled her on the prairie; in time the colt got very tame, but it was several months before the mare could be taught to behave herself properly.

We got the hay all finished by the middle of August, and altogether got about thirty tons; we had a little left over

from last year, and with this and the straw we hoped to pull the cattle through the winter.

An old schoolfellow, J—, had written to me about the place, and it was arranged that he should come out and stay with us. Accordingly, he came over on the "Parisian," and arrived about the 23rd of August, just as we were beginning to cut some of the wheat. The next day the binder was set to work, and J— and I followed it round to set up the sheaves. The binder is an American patent, which cuts the corn and ties it up in sheaves, thus saving an immense amount of labour. It was not at all hard work, for the wheat was thin, and sometimes the sheaves were twenty yards apart. We had twenty acres of wheat and ten of oats: the oats were as poor as the wheat, and in some places had been entirely eaten off by the gophers, a small ground squirrel which swarms on the prairie, living in holes which it burrows out, the dirt from which lies in heaps all over the place. We had traps set for them, and had killed and shot some hundreds.

We soon commenced stacking the grain in the field, ready for threshing. The average Canadian farmer takes very little trouble with his stacks, but whether this policy is right depends very much upon the weather; Mr. T—, however, having learnt to farm properly in the old country, built his in a thoroughly English fashion. They were soon finished, as far as the wheat was concerned, for the oats were not yet in a fit state to cut. The summer frosts which sometimes spoil the wheat in the North West luckily kept off until the middle of September, and then we had all safe but the oats, which, being merely for horse feed, were not damaged, and, though rather green, we cut them and soon had them stacked away.

The next job was to plough good wide fireguards round the stacks and buildings; a great many prairie fires were about, but round our place the grass was hardly long enough to burn; still, it was best to be on the safe side, and so we made good precautions. The best way to go to work is to plough half a dozen furrows twenty yards apart and burn the grass in between; it is then almost impossible for a fire to jump it, except in a very strong wind, and then nothing can prevent the whole place from being burnt up.

The ducks and geese, which had been up north for the breeding season, now began to come back, and the lake was covered with them; we constructed a punt out of some rough boards, and every evening had some good sport, sometimes getting a boat-load; the occasional sinking of our craft did not deter us from our sport; indeed, a cold bath was very enjoyable after a hard day's work. We came across plenty of ducks' nests round the lake, and other wild birds' in the woods, specimens of which I took and sent to England.

As the weather got cooler we set to work to plough up some of the land which had been in crop; we had done about twenty acres when one day Mr. T - expressed a desire to see a new settlement called Lake Dauphin, which had sprung up over the Riding Mountains, about eighty miles to the north; he offered to take us with him, and so it was settled that he, J- - and I should start on the following Thursday, leaving Mr. T - 's son to look after the cattle in our absence.

CHAPTER III.

A Trip to Lake Dauphin The Journey Camping Heavy Bush Whiskey jacks The New Settlement The Lake Haystacks Our Camping Ground Ducks and Geese After a Moose Prairie Fire An Adventure with Wolves—The Return Journey Oil Wells—Indian Encampment Moosemeat Home Again Threshing Shoal Lake Fish.

We got the wagon and things all ready the night before, and as early as six o'clock had the horses ready and made a good start; we took a tent, kettles, pans, and plenty of bread, meat and provisions. We were well supplied with greatcoats, buffalo robes and blankets, not to mention guns, rifles and revolvers. It was very cold when we started, and we needed all our wraps, but when we got into the valley and past the Hudson Bay Post, the sun rose, and the fading leaves of the dense bush we had now entered were soon lit up by the warming rays, and everything promised well for a beautiful Indian summer day.

After passing through the Indian Reservation, we came to a large horse ranche, owned by a Mr. Campbell, the discoverer of the Yukon River. The trees began to get larger and thicker, and about noon, having crossed the Saskatchewan River, we camped for dinner on its banks. Soon after re-starting we passed a stopping-house, where were camped a gang of cowboys with a herd of some eight hundred cattle on the way up to some feeding ground for the winter. Some distance further on we came to Lake Odie, in which the Little Saskatchewan has its source; it was covered with wildfowl, and several Indians were out in canoes shooting.

We wished to reach a certain shanty that we had been told of, and where we intended to camp for the night; it was already getting dark, and we thought we must have missed it, when we came to an opening in the dense spruce bush, and on the other side stood the object of our search. We put our horses into a place that had been made for the purpose by some others who had come before us, and looked round the shanty.

It was only a few feet square, built of logs and roofed with turf and branches, with just enough room for two to sleep in, and as Mr. T— preferred to lie in the wagon, J— and I made our bed in there. We made a good supper of bread and salt pork, and sat round the fire talking till the moon rose, when we turned in. It was a rather curious sensation for us who had never been out before, and it was a long time before we could get to sleep; the silence was intense, broken only by the occasional hooting of an owl or the yelping of a wolf, with which the forests abound.

We were up at daybreak and found a little snow falling; soon after, however, the sun came out and made things look a little more cheerful. We soon had a good fire going, and a pot of tea ready for breakfast; the bacon was burnt a little, but we were all hungry and didn't mind that. As we were eating, several birds called whiskey-jacks, a species of jay, came down and settled right at our feet and began to pick up the crumbs; these birds are well known to all who camp out; no one attempts to harm them, and they have been known to eat out of a man's hand.

We started off about seven o'clock. The road from Strathclair had been a gradual rise; we were now on the top of

the mountain, and began rapidly to descend. In some places the wagon had to go down some very steep descents, almost precipices, and the only thing the horses could do was to lay back on their haunches and slide down. About noon we came to the valley of the Vermilion, called a valley, but really deserving the name of a gorge, so steep are the hills between which the river runs, and here we camped for dinner. A few more miles of bush, oak, ash, spruce and maple, and we came out into the new settlement.

It was very flat and appeared to be fertile; several shanties were dotted about, and some people were busy ploughing; here and there bluffs of trees were scattered over the plain, which gave it a park-like appearance, and also made good shelter for the cattle. We saw several good herds, some of them very well bred, and all showing that there was more feed up here than in the part of the country we had just left. We did not stay anywhere, but continued our way to the lake; after passing through about three miles of bush we came out upon a vast meadow, dotted all over with haystacks; on the far horizon we saw a blue streak, which, on getting closer, we found to be the lake. We drove up to some trees and bushes where we could make some shelter for the horses, and where we found a hole which had been used as a lime-kiln by half-breeds, and a kind of lean-to made of poles and covered over with hay.

Some farmers down in the older settlements, not having enough hay for their cattle, had come up here and cut all they wanted, intending to drive the animals up for the winter, hence the number of haystacks.

Lake Dauphin is twenty-eight miles long and twelve miles wide, and is connected with Lake Winnipegosis by

the Turtle River. There were hundreds of ducks and geese about the evening we arrived; the water is shallow for some distance out and makes a good feeding place for them.

We were rather tired after our journey, so turned in early, J— and I sleeping in the lean-to and Mr. T— in the wagon. Next morning we made our fire in the lime-kiln hole and had a good breakfast, after which we took our guns and had a walk along the shore; there were plenty of wildfowl, but as they were some distance out and we had no boat, we did not have very good sport. After dinner we went inland among the bushes after rabbits and anything that we could lay our hands on. We thought at one time that we had got upon the track of a moose, and no doubt we had, but though we followed it for some distance, we were obliged to give up the hunt, as the trail got mixed up with some cow-tracks, and we were not yet expert enough to distinguish the one from the other; there are a lot of these animals about, and it is a good thing to shoot one, the whole carcase, with the skin, being worth about fifty dollars. We got a few birds and made a supper off them, and then went to bed in our lean-to, in which we slept as well as in a feather bed.

The next day, being Sunday, we did nothing but look about the country; there were a lot of geese and swans on the lake, but too far out to be got at. It was a beautiful Indian summer day, and we could see the trees on the opposite shore quite plainly. About noon we saw smoke to the south, and found that a prairie fire had sprung up, and as the wind was in that direction, and we thought we might be in some danger from it, we moved the wagon and goods on to the shingle of the beach. We could not

move the horses, as there was no place on the beach to put them, so J— and I determined to sit up all night and watch, and in case the fire came near, to move them out of danger. The fire, when it started, was a long way off, and seemed to burn slowly, but when it got dark it appeared to be quite near, and lighted up the hills and trees for miles round. J— and I got into the hole, lit a fire and made ourselves comfortable; we had some potatoes, which we roasted, both to amuse ourselves and to keep out the cold. About midnight the fire went out, having evidently come to a river of which we were not aware, so we thought we might just as well go to sleep where we were, and, rolling up in a blanket, I soon dozed off.

It could not have been very long before J— woke me up and whispered, "Look out, there's wolves round!" I generally take a good deal of waking, but I didn't that time; we got our guns ready and waited; very soon they started yelping the most miserable noise any animal can make. We got up several times to look round, but all was dark, and we could see nothing; soon after they left off yelping, and as we did not hear anything for some time, we thought they had gone away. I was almost asleep again, when, for some unknown reason, I turned my head and looked up out of the hole, and on the bank saw a large wolf crouching down and ready to spring on us. When he saw me turn he moved back, and in doing so knocked some soil down upon J—; we both jumped up at once, and heard a scampering, but as we could see nothing we did not fire. After this we left the hole and went to the camp, where we found Mr. T— with his rifle ready to defend himself; he had heard the wolves, and had sat up all night to watch the horses. For the remainder of the night we took turns to watch, for

the bush seemed alive with the brutes, to judge from the horrible yelpings that continued till daybreak. However, nothing further transpired, and we could none of us get a shot at them. We heard afterwards that a few months before a man and a team of oxen had been eaten by wolves in that same place, so we considered ourselves lucky to get off so easily.

The next morning we had arranged to start back, and after a walk round with the guns, during which we paid a visit to the hole, which we found the wolves had visited after we left, and had left their tracks very plainly about, we hitched up the horses and made a move. We went slowly, stopping at several settlers' houses to enquire about the country: they all seemed to think a great deal of it, and had great hopes for the future. We camped for the night in the settlement, on the bank of the Vermilion River, where we were joined by a young Englishman who lived at Strathclair, and who was going down there. We got a tent fixed up and had a good supper, after which we sat round the fire and listened to the yarns of an old trapper and hunter, who came over to us from his shanty a little way off. We all went to sleep and did not keep the fire up all night: the consequence was that when we woke in the morning we were nearly starved, for it was very cold in the mornings at that time of the year, and had to knock a few trees down before we could get warmth in us. We started off in good time and went round by another route, that along the Vermilion valley, joining the old trail about half way to Strathclair. On this trail we passed a sawmill and oil wells: they had a hole bored several hundred feet, but as yet had not "struck ile." We camped for the night soon after joining the old trail at a place near the summit; at

the same place were camped some men with a herd of cattle going up, from whom we got some milk, and made a good supper off it. After being so cold the night before, we decided to take watches and keep up a good fire all night, so after we had got the tent fixed we all set to work to cut a big pile of firewood.

At five o'clock the next morning we were at breakfast, and soon after made a start. A little further on we came to an Indian encampment, where there were two or three tepees, and several mooseheads and skins hanging to poles outside; we went up to the largest tepee and went inside, where the family were squatted round a fire in the centre, eating out of a pot, and tried to make them understand that we wanted some moosemeat; one of the men went with us to another tepee and fetched out a handful of thin stuff rolled up exactly like leather, for which he asked 50 cents. The meat of the moose is pulled by the squaws into strips and is hung on poles over a strong smoke for several days, after which it gets the leather-like appearance. It needs boiling for two days before it is sufficiently tender to be eaten, and even then I can't say it is good, as it retains too much of the smoke and the peculiar taste and smell which characterises everything that Indians have to do with.

We met several settlers going up with wagon-loads of goods, and some with large herds of cattle. At one time we were in fear of a bush fire, as we saw smoke ahead, and, the wind coming from that direction, we could smell it quite plainly; we pushed on, however, and passed it on the left, not a very great distance off; we were rather anxious for a time, as to be caught in a bush fire with no water

near means certain death, and a great many travellers and hunters, who have never been heard of since a certain fire, have no doubt been lost in this way. As we came out of the bush on to the prairie we saw fires start up on both sides of us, but as they were where the grass was thin and short, we took little heed of them.

A few more miles and we arrived at home, where we found things all right, and everyone ready to start threshing. In most parts of the country a machine comes into the settlement and all the farmers go round with it, helping one another; this is a good way and saves hired labour. A few days after our return from Lake Dauphin, J— and I went out threshing; we found it tough work at first, as we were put on the straw stack behind the carriers, where all the dust comes out; by night time we were nearly blinded and suffocated, and at that time we thought a few more days like that would kill us; however, since then we have survived a good many harder days even than that. The machine was run by steam, and did its work very well: at every place we went to we were fed on the best that could possibly be got, this being the general rule. At our place the grain turned out poorly, though what there was of it was of good quality. In some parts of Manitoba the grain is carried direct to the thresher, thus saving stacking, which is a considerable item on a large farm.

After everyone had been threshed out, those who had any corn to spare set about finding a market for it. Having heard that a good price was being paid for wheat at Shoal Lake, a station eight miles west, we took a load over there. After we had disposed of it we went down to the lake, a fair-sized piece of water, and borrowed a boat and some fishing

tackle; we did not have much sport, however, and contented ourselves with a row up the lake. The lakes of Manitoba are very rich in fish, the principal and best eating being the whitefish, whilst large numbers of pike are caught and shipped to the Eastern markets.



CHAPTER IV.

now-sleighing—Bush Work—Another Trip to Lake Dauphin—Driving Cattle
On Guard—Cold Weather—The Settlement Again—Our Destination—The
Shanty—Improvements—The Stables—Trapping Wolves—Hauling Hay
Frozen Feet—Home—Christmas—Cutting Logs—Bears—A Blizzard—Hard
Times—Feed running Short—Rabbits—Prairie Chickens.

Shortly after this the first snow fell, and we soon had to discard wagons and take to sleighs; we found they were much more comfortable to ride in, and, when the roads were good, could be drawn much easier than a wagon. We had some very sharp weather, and when all farm work was stopped, we set to work to cut and haul firewood and rails; two would go every day for a load while the other stayed and fed and cleaned the horses and cattle. By this time some of the cows and young calves were shut up in a stable; the rest ran round the straw stack in the yard, and at night and on very cold days were shut up and fed in an enclosed yard.

Our nearest neighbour, an Englishman named B—, had cut a lot of hay up at Lake Dauphin, and intended driving forty head of his cattle up for the winter; as he could get no one to help him he asked Mr. T— if he could spare J— and myself, and as we were not at all busy, we got off for a month. We were glad of the opportunity to go up again, although we expected to have a harder time than we had before.

We started one day at the end of November, B— leading

with a sleigh-load of goods, then the cattle with J-- and I driving them, the rear being brought up by a fellow with a team of oxen and another load of goods. It was a bitterly cold morning, with the wind blowing straight in our faces, and as we had some trouble in driving the cattle, we only travelled about twelve miles, to where the bush began, before night came on, and we had to camp in an old shanty. Each man took two hours' watch to look after the cattle, and, with his rifle ready, to keep the wolves at a distance, and some nights this proved to be a nasty job. We had good skin coats and buffalo robes, so that we made ourselves fairly comfortable when our turn came to sleep.

The second day we travelled slower than ever, the cattle continually running into the bush; but that night we found a favourable camping place where some hay had been cut, and on which the cattle made a good meal. There was no shanty near, and as we had no tent, we were obliged to sleep under the stars; however, we made a roaring fire, and having laid our buffalo robes out in front of it, rolled ourselves in these and made ourselves as comfortable as the circumstances would permit. We had plenty of good food, and indeed we needed it, for the thermometer was constantly as low as twenty degrees below zero; every night we milked some of the cows, and partook of a good pot of boiled bread and milk before turning in to sleep. There were three calves that gave us more trouble than the whole herd, and by day and night we were obliged to keep an eye on these, or they would be off into the bush; one dinner time we left them for a few minutes, which cost us a three hours' search before we could recover them.

On the third day we made a little more headway, and at

night reached the shanty which was the first camping place on our former trip, and which we found had been half burnt down by some careless person's camp fire. The bush was very thick here, and we found it almost impossible to look after the cattle. Early in the morning B— and I went out to round them up, and got lost, and the sky being clouded and no signs to be seen, were several hours before we came to a place which we recognised, though we had probably been walking about within a short distance of the camp.

The next day, the fourth, we got on well, the road being all down hill; on the way a beast ran between two large spruce trees, and stuck fast there, not being able to move either way; eventually we had to cut one tree down, which occasioned some delay, and nearly killed the beast. We were four miles from the nearest house when night came on, but we had made up our minds to reach it in order to sleep under a roof and to get some hay for the cattle, so we trudged on, completely worn out, taking turns to ride now and again. At last, about ten o'clock, when we had almost given up hopes of reaching it, we came to the house, owned by an Englishman, for whom B— had some goods. We made a pot of coffee and got our cattle into the yard and saw them well fed, and then rolled ourselves up in our robes and had the soundest sleep we ever had in our lives.

It was seven o'clock before we could get up next morning, and then we had to unload the goods and feed the cattle, so that we were late in making a start; we had twelve miles to go to where B— had built a small shanty on the bank of the Wilson River, a short distance from the lake, and it was an hour after dark before we got there. We found it a very small place; the logs had not been plastered in

between; there was no door or window yet put in, and no flooring down. Across the frozen river, which was twenty yards wide, was a stable and yard for the cattle; we soon had them fed, and then, having fastened skins over the doorway and window, made ourselves comfortable on the ground. We spent the next few days in getting the stables plastered and the shanty generally improved, and when we had got the door and window on, and the holes in the wall stopped up, we found the place a good deal warmer. We next set to work to make chairs and tables; we had hitherto used boxes and upturned buckets; then, not being content with sleeping on the ground, we made two bunks on the wall, and in a short time we were quite snug. Occasionally we went round the bush for a little shooting, but we seldom got much besides birds and rabbits, although we often came upon the tracks of bears and other large animals.

On very cold nights we often heard sharp reports like cannon; this turned out to be the ice on the lake which burst through the intense frost. One day we went out a few miles on the lake, and came to a mountain of loose ice which had been thrown up by one of these eruptions. In places where the snow had been blown away the ice was smooth and clear, and appeared to be not more than a foot thick, though it was really more than three feet. Along the lake shore were hundreds of tracks of wolves and foxes, and we set the traps we had brought up with pieces of meat, but we were evidently not expert enough, for as a rule we found the meat had been eaten, but no signs of a wolf.

One day we walked over to the place where we had had our little adventure with the wolves, and in the bushes round there had some good sport with rabbits; we were

rather too late in starting back, and it got dark so very soon, that we lost our way and were wandering about for several hours, firing off our guns at intervals to attract attention, before we could make out our whereabouts.

In order to water the cattle we cut holes in the ice every morning; there was generally a good deal of crushing to get at these, and one day one of the calves got pushed in; we rescued him with great difficulty and carried him into the shanty, where we wrapped him in a buffalo robe in front of the fire; he seemed nearly dead for a time, but presently he showed his gratitude by getting up and upsetting the table, on which was spread our dinner, and finally taking a flying leap through the window; two days later he fell in again, but this time the stable was deemed quite good enough for him.

Having made the house and stables comfortable, we next set to work to haul the hay, which was stacked a few miles away; the snow was about eight inches deep and made good sleighing, so that we were able to put on some large loads. Our nights we spent in telling tales, sometimes varied with a song, all sitting close round the stove, as the shanty was not as warm as it might have been.

One very cold morning J-- and I were walking along the river with our guns, when we came to a natural spring which had flooded the ice; I got one of my mocassins wet, but, as my foot kept warm, thought nothing more of it until we got home, when, on going near the stove, I felt a most terrible pain in my foot; with great difficulty I got my mocassin and socks off, and found that the bottom of my foot was badly frozen, and was rapidly developing into a great blister. If I had known it was frozen before I went

into the warmth it would have been all right, but strange to say, the part that is frozen always feels warmer than the rest of the body. I lay in bed three days before I could set my foot to the ground, enduring great pain, and for several years after it was very tender, and necessitated great care during the winter.

Four days after this B— was going down to Strathclair, so we decided to go with him, as it was close to Christmas; we started early in the morning, but before we had gone far one of the sleigh runners broke, and we had to cut a new one out of a tree as a makeshift till we came to a house, where we borrowed a sleigh. It was much warmer in the bush and we got along at a good pace, and stayed that night at a shanty which had lately been put up as a stopping-place. As the roof was not yet completed we did not find it very comfortable, but we made ourselves a good shake-down on the floor.

The next morning was very cold, but we made a good start and soon came to the outskirts of the bush, where we found a small blizzard blowing, the trail all covered up, and the snow was about two feet deep. We were evidently in for a hard ride, as we had over twelve miles to go, and the horses could not trot a yard; the snow beat in our faces, and occasionally we had to stop to thaw our noses and ears by rubbing them with snow. Just as it was getting dark we arrived home; it was Christmas Eve, and as we expected, we found a good pile of letters and papers from England, which kept us busy for the rest of the week.

On Christmas Day we had very little work to do, and enjoyed ourselves as well as we could, having the comforts of a good warm house, which were very acceptable to us after our journey. For several days we had very rough weather,

and the snow, which had been falling a good deal, drifted up round the buildings, so that we had to dig the stables out every morning. When the storm was over we set about getting more firewood and rails; we had to go a long way for these—a mile beyond the Bend—and we found it very cold riding backwards and forwards; but we could always keep warm when we were there; indeed, we found cutting timber fairly hot work, even in winter. One day Mr. T— and I went alone, and as we were just entering the bush we saw two black things lying on a snowdrift; we soon saw that they were bears, and as we had no fire-arms with us, and did not care about tackling them with axes, we left them, intending to bring our rifles next day; but the next day there was a strong blizzard, and when the weather again permitted us to go, we found everything snowed up, and no trace of the bears' hole. However, as we came back we met a pack of wolves, and had a little sport with them.

Soon after Christmas, an old mare of Mr. T—'s having died, we dragged her out into the field and set traps round her; but the wolves were too sharp, and we caught very few. Every day that was fit, two of us went to the bush for a load of wood, till one day in February a terrible blizzard came on. We had the hardest job to feed the animals, for the wind and snow beating in our faces prevented us from breathing, and we dare not go many yards away from the buildings for fear of getting lost. After this the snow was more than three feet deep on the prairie, and in some places had drifted to a depth of ten or twelve feet, so that it was impossible to walk without snowshoes. The lake, at which we had watered the cattle from holes, was frozen solid so that we had now to go to the well. The straw

in the field was all finished, and we had to give the hay to the cattle, and when we had only enough of that left for the horses, we had even to take the old musty straw off the roofs, which the cattle were glad enough to eat. The trail to the bush had been all snowed up, and we could do nothing but cut up the wood we had got, and sharpen some stakes; we reckoned to have cut a thousand stakes, a thousand rails, and over twenty loads of firewood, so that we did a good winter's work. At night we generally walked on snowshoes to the station, where we got our mails and sat in the store and heard the latest news from anyone who had got off the train. Sometimes a hunter would come down from the north with a dog-sleigh, and sometimes a band of Indians would arrive with loads of furs from some of the northern Hudson Bay Posts.

Some days, when we had little to do, we walked to a bush a few miles away, where there were a good many rabbits; we generally got a lot, sometimes forty or fifty, and as they were excellent eating, they were a change from the regular beef. We had killed a beast before Christmas, as all farmers do, and it had been cut up and put in an outhouse, where it froze; and this was the only variety of meat we had, except occasionally some rabbits or prairie-chickens. The prairie-chicken is similar to the British sharp-tailed grouse; it is very plentiful in the North West, and in winter will come into the yards and settle on the stacks to pick up any grains that may be about; it has a very large breast, nearly the whole of the meat being there, and makes an excellent dish. At Strathclair there were not many, but in some places I have seen hundreds in a field picking up seeds, and so tame that they may be knocked over with a stone.

CHAPTER V.

Buying a Farm—Starting for Qu'appelle—A long Walk—Lost—Fort Qu'appelle—
The Farm—A Team of Mares—Seeding—The Mosquitoes Again—The Settlement—Doings at the Fort—An Indian Chief—Hunting for Wood—Pic-nic.

I had heard from some friends at Qu'appelle, North West Territories, several times; they seemed to think a great deal of the country, and told me of a farm near there that was for sale; I made enquiries and found it to be very reasonable, and eventually bought it for a small sum. It consisted of one hundred and sixty acres, thirty of which were ploughed, with a small shanty and stables built on it. As we had little work to do, and the winter would soon be over, I thought I would go there at once; Mr. T— consented to my going, although I had only been with him eleven months, twelve being the time agreed upon.

It was nearly the end of March when I left, and the days were getting warmer; J— had to stay on till August, and we were not likely to meet again in the country. The train left Strathelair at nine o'clock in the morning, and as some snow had drifted during the night, a snow-plough was put on. The plough consists of a large plate in front of the engine, brought to a point in the centre, which cuts the snow and throws it out on either side like a plough. Sometimes, when we came to a larger drift than usual, the train would be brought up with a bump, which threw us into the opposite seats, and then it had to go back and make another charge before it could get through. By three o'clock

we arrived at Portage la Prairie, where we got on to the Canadian Pacific Railway. There are some very good farms near here, which, in summer, with the crops growing, look very well, and even then, in winter, we could see the improved look about the houses and buildings.

On the train was a North West mounted policeman with a prisoner going to Regina, the headquarters, and capital of the North West Territories. The North West Mounted Police are a fine body of 1,000 men, the greater number in barracks at Regina, the rest distributed among the towns and villages in the Territories, where they are engaged in looking after the Indians and suppressing the liquor traffic, which at that time was forbidden. The prisoner, who was a horse-stealer, tried to get away at one of the small stations, but the policeman's revolver soon brought him back to his senses, and he continued his journey under a close watch. I did not go to sleep, as we were due to arrive at Qu'appelle at four o'clock in the morning.

I now found I had done a very foolish thing; not expecting to have much expense I had brought very little money with me, but at Portage la Prairie my baggage proved to be overweight, and I was charged heavily for it, leaving me only forty cents with which to get to my destination. I had brought some sandwiches with me from Strathclair, and these I ate on the train. On arrival at Qu'appelle Station I found I had to go forty miles north; a stage-coach ran to Fort Qu'appelle, a distance of over twenty miles, every day, but as the fare was two dollars, I decided to walk; so, having bought some biscuits and something to drink, which left me twenty cents, I set out just as the day began to break. It was a very good road, the snow being packed

hard, and for the first few miles I got on at a good pace. There were several farms scattered about, all in a rougher state than those in Manitoba, and a good many shanties which had been deserted; the country itself seemed much the same rolling prairie, with clumps of trees or bluffs, as they are called, dotted about, though there did not appear to be any big bush. I was getting very tired and began to think I had taken the wrong trail, when I came to a steep hill, down which the road went, winding among trees and rocks, and at last came out on a level plain, on which Fort Qu'appelle is situated. The plain is sheltered by steep hills on each side, a mile apart; the River Qu'appelle runs through the valley, joining two lakes, both several miles in extent, and on the bank of the river, between the two lakes, Fort Qu'appelle is built. The lakes in summer are covered with wildfowl and swarm with fish, and the trees and bushes scattered about the shores make it one of the prettiest spots in the North West. The Fort is a large post of the Hudson Bay Company, and has several stores, a flour mill, churches, school and other buildings.

When I got there I enquired if any one had come to meet me, but found they had not, so I decided to try and walk it, as it was only another eighteen miles north. I bought a few more biscuits and washed them down with snow, and then set out about noon. I had been pointed out the way, and got on all right till about three o'clock, when it began to blow hard; the trail was soon covered up, and I was completely lost; after wandering about up to my waist in snow for over an hour, I saw a house some distance away and with difficulty got to it, but found it occupied by Indians, who didn't seem to like my calling in, so I struck off again; soon I saw telegraph poles and found myself on

the trail which runs between Qu'appelle and Prince Albert, three hundred miles north. I didn't care to go on any further, so started to walk back to the Fort, but a few miles along the trail saw a light some distance off and made for it, in the hope of getting shelter.

I was tired and hungry, having walked over forty miles without food, so I asked at the house if I might stay the night there. The man, who was drunk, and who, I afterwards found, was one of the biggest rogues in the country, refused me and shut the door in my face. With great difficulty I got on to the trail again and made for the Fort, four miles distant. I must have gone to sleep on the way, for I remember nothing till I got near the valley, and found my mitts fallen off and my fingers frozen. I went to the hotel and told them where I was going, and how I had walked all the way; they were very good, and gave me a bed, and for three days I stayed there, scarcely eating anything, and altogether in a very poor state.

On the fourth day Mr. W—'s son came down with a sleigh; he said the mail had been delayed by the severe weather and they had only just got my letter announcing my arrival; it was blowing half a blizzard then, so we did not make a start until the next morning. I found that the people who pointed out the road for me were wrong, and I should have kept along the Prince Albert trail, instead of the smaller one that I was advised to take. It was a good way up the trail, and there seemed to be plenty of houses about, though I found that most of them were deserted.

We passed the place I had bought about a mile before

we came to W—'s; it was some distance from the trail, and situated on the south slope of a hill, along the bottom of which was a dried-up creek. I arranged to stay with my friends till I got my place in order, so I at once set to work to get some things. Ploughs, harrows, a wagon, and several smaller articles, I bought from some people who were leaving the country, and the principal item, a pair of good mares, I purchased from a man at Qu'appelle Station; they were as good a team as any in the country at that time, and just the right kind for light farming and breeding.

The snow was a long time going, and it was not until the end of April that we could put the plough in the ground. As soon as it was fit I began to sow wheat on my land, doing a small piece at a time and then ploughing it under; in this way, one of the best methods of sowing, but apt to make the crop rather late, I put in twelve acres of wheat and twelve acres of oats. The fencing round the ploughing was in a shocking state, and took some time to put right; the stakes were all rotten, and necessitated being pulled up and re-sharpened. In my spare time I put in a few potatoes, and some onion, carrot and turnip seeds, hoping to raise enough for my own consumption. The house on the place was but a poor attempt at a building: it was very low—so low that one had to bend nearly double to get in at the door; the roof was constructed with rough poles, plastered over with mud, and held up in the middle by a log made fast in the floor; it was eighteen feet long by fifteen feet wide, all one room, with a small cellar underneath. On one side was a small outhouse for keeping tools, &c; the granary was at the back of the house and near the stackyard, and the stables, such as they were, were some

little distance away; whilst in front of the house, sloping down to the creek, was a small piece of ploughing which I used as a garden.

The mosquitoes soon made their appearance, and as if to make up for last year's leniency, came out in double strength; some evenings, after a hot day, they came out in clouds, and woe betide the unlucky man or animal who was exposed to these pests; at work in the daytime they nearly drove the horses mad, and as for the men, one's face and hands were continually in blisters: nets are too hot to be worn at work, and can only be used for riding and driving. The only successful method of driving the mosquitoes from the cattle and horses is to set fire to some damp straw or manure, and so create a thick smoke; it will burn for many hours, and the animals will lie round it quite free from their tormentors.

There were very few ducks in that part of the country, as we had little or no water near, except in the spring when the snow melts, and that soon evaporates or soaks into the ground.

The seeding and fencing being finished, I began to break up some more land; my team was well suited for this work, and although the ground was dry and hard, we got on very well and ploughed up a nice piece of virgin prairie; the great drawback to the work was the quantity of stones, which had to be taken out and piled in heaps, ready to be hauled away at some future time.

We only got our mails once a week. The Post Office district was called Hayward, after the first settler in the neigh-

bourhood, at whose house the office was situated. A monthly Church of England service was also held there by the missionary from Fort Qu'appelle, whilst at another house in the settlement a Presbyterian service was conducted. We seldom went to Fort Qu'appelle oftener than once a month in the summer, but on these trips we frequently saw some lively doings. One day a band of Indians came in with a drove of ponies; shortly after, some cowboys came in with another drove of ponies for sale. Of course the cowboys managed to get hold of some whiskey, although we were still under the Prohibition Laws, and having filled themselves with it, lay down to sleep it off; in the meantime, the Indians, seeing some of the white men's horses were not branded, amused themselves by singling these out from the rest, and having got them mixed with their own, started off. When the cowboys came to themselves next morning they at once missed their unbranded horses, and seeing the Indians had gone, followed their tracks, but by the time they came up with them the horses had been sold, and were in different parts of the country; so, finding they had no evidence, the cowboys were obliged to come back empty-handed, and dare not even relieve their minds by a friendly shot at the redskins. Another day I was in town a commotion was caused by the arrival of one of the neighbouring chiefs; he was a tall fellow, with long black hair, and his face streaked with all kinds of paint till it looked like a piece of patchwork; he was seated in a rickety old Red River cart, the wheels of which squeaked for want of grease. On his head he wore an old silk hat, well ventilated with bullet holes; his tunic had once belonged to a mounted policeman, but had streaks of blue and yellow paint over it, and his black trousers were ornamented with ribbons of all colours, whilst a pair of old

white running shoes completed his toilet. At one of the stores he got out of his chariot and for some time was busily engaged in devouring a barrel of sugar till someone stopped him.

By the time I had finished breaking it was the end of June, and the crops were looking very well, far better than I had seen any at Strathclair. As usual, there were a great many gophers about, and unless they were rigorously looked after, made sad havoc with the crops; in some places, indeed, large patches were eaten off close to the ground. We had some very hot weather, but more rain than last year, so that everything promised well for a prosperous season; the grass on the prairie was fresh and green, whilst in the low places, or sloughs, the wild hay bid fair to be a large crop.

After breaking I went to help a man cut some logs for his stable, in return for some other work: it was very different from Strathclair; instead of cutting down the trees as they came, we were obliged to hunt about for one sufficiently large to cut; however, in time we managed to cut the required number, and started to haul them home. On the 1st of July, Dominion Day, a pic-nic was held in the settlement, and people came from miles round; there was cricket and other games, and the good things reminded one of a pastry-cook's shop at home.

CHAPTER VI.

Hay—A Mishap—The Crops—Hunting Horses—Gardens—A Summer Frost—
The Binder—Statute Labour—Divisions—Sitting Bull—Will Our Indians
Rebel?—Anxiety—Backsetting—Shooting—The Thresher—Meals—Value of
Grain—The Trail—Cord-wood—Wearing Apparel—Lumbering—A Party.

In haying and harvesting, as in threshing, the farmers work together, and generally go in pairs to get their work done; so I arranged to work with a man during haying and harvest. We had heard that there was some splendid hay a few miles north, so we decided to camp up there and cut it. We went up the Prince Albert trail a few miles, and then turned off into a country covered with large sloughs, in which was plenty of hay nearly six feet high; we determined to camp right here, stack the hay, and haul it down in the winter. I had started to fix up the tent, and W— had gone round a few times with the mower, when it broke, and we had to pack up and start back again. The part that was broken was sent to Winnipeg, and it was a week before we could start again, by which time some half-breeds had begun where we left off, so that we were obliged to cut the sloughs near home, where we found a good supply of hay, and altogether got about fifty loads, of which we took our shares. Of course this hay is not to be compared with English hay, or even to the eastern hay which is shipped over to England. It grows perfectly wild, and is coarse and thick-bladed; however, it makes good

feed, and has splendid fattening qualities, although some people, newly arrived from England, do not like the look of it, and don't care to use it until they find they can get no other.

The crops were coming on well, the oats especially being a tremendous length, some of the straws being nearly half an inch thick at the base. It is no rare occurrence for a field of oats to yield a hundred bushels an acre, and even more than that. The wheat looked very well, and if a frost did not come to spoil it, promised large returns. Wheat has often been known to yield sixty bushels to the acre, and in a fair season generally averages forty bushels.

During the summer, when the mosquitoes were not too bad, I tethered my horses on the prairie by driving a stake in the ground, and fastening them with a long rope: I was frequently bothered by finding that one of them had broken its rope or pulled up the picket and got away: I then had to start after it and track it, either by its footprints, or by the mark made by the dragging rope: sometimes it would go all over the settlement, and one day it took me to the File Hills, twelve miles east, before I came up with it.

The gardens were doing well this year, and we had young potatoes six weeks after they were planted: some people had black currant bushes in their gardens: this was a good season for them, and even the wild currants and gooseberries were plentiful on the prairie. There is another kind of wild fruit, the saskatoon, which was also very plentiful: this is a delicious fruit, rather resembling a small grape, both in form and flavour. They make splendid wine, and are much used for this purpose by the settlers.

One morning at the end of August, just when the crops were nearly ripe, we found there had been five degrees of frost; the wheat was injured, but, being nearly ripe, it would not be much the worse for milling purposes, though the price would be dropped. I had bought a new binder in partnership with a neighbour, which cost \$170 complete, and as soon as the wheat was sufficiently hard, we cut it. We worked three big horses on the binder, one of us driving, the other following and setting up the sheaves. The crop altogether was a great improvement on that of last year at Strathclair, and took some time to cut. The oats turned out well, the shocks standing thick on the ground. The stacking did not take very long, for we had altogether two wagons and three men; I built my own stacks, and if they did not look as shapely as they might have done, I had a very good excuse in that it was the first attempt.

Every person owning property is required to put in a certain amount of work every year on Government roads or fireguards; it is called Statute Labour, and this year we were required to plough a good fireguard round the settlement or township, that is, six miles each side of a square consisting of thirty-six square miles. The country is divided by ranges, townships and sections. Ranges run north and south, and are six miles wide; townships run east and west, and are also six miles wide, thus cutting up the country into squares of thirty-six square miles, which are again cut up into sections of six hundred and forty acres or one square mile each. Of these the even numbered sections are open for homesteading, the conditions being that every man who takes a quarter section, one hundred and sixty acres, shall work and live on it for three

years, after which it becomes his own property. A township is divided thus:

W.		N.						E.	
		RANGE.							
		31	32	33	34	35	36		
		30	29	28	27	26	25		
		19	20	21	22	23	24		
		18	17	16	15	14	13		
		7	8	9	10	11	12		
		6	5	4	3	2	1		
		S.							

The sections are numbered, and are divided into four quarters. I was situated on the south-west quarter of section 18, township 23, range 13, west of the 2nd Meridian. Two sections in every township belong to the Hudson Bay Company, two to the School District, and, along the line of railway, the railway company own a certain amount of land in each township. The Government, every autumn, causes fireguards to be ploughed round the townships, and it was on this work that we were set. Of course the mosquitoes had all disappeared by then, and we had a few cold, frosty nights.

It was in this year that the Indian chief, Sitting Bull, broke out in rebellion in the States, a hundred miles south of us. We were all ready to go and fight if wanted, and had got our arms and horses ready. At one time it looked

serious, for Sitting Bull sent some of his men up to the Sioux Indians near Fort Qu'appelle, and incited them to rebel; however, the authorities got wind of the matter, and posted a guard round the reservation, which was effectual in keeping the Indians in siege; several of us went down, and a body of Mounted Police came from Regina. When at last the news came of Sitting Bull's death, everything quieted down, and the incident was soon forgotten.

When the harvest was over I began to backset what I had broken up in the summer, that is, after the sods have rotted, to plough it again two inches deeper than before; it is then ready to sow in the spring, and will harrow down quite fine. The weather began to get very cold about the beginning of October, and stopped all farm work. The ducks and geese had now come down from the north; the ducks had all gone to the lakes at the Fort, but we had plenty of geese settle on our stubbles, as well as a species of wild turkey, called sandhill cranes; they settled in flocks, and if there were any bushes or other shelter in the way, could be stalked, but they were very wary and always seemed to have one on the watch with his long neck up. A half-breed fellow came down to my place once and seeing four cranes in the field, crept up behind a bush, where he waited till they were all in a row, when, making a slight noise, they all cocked up their heads; at that moment he fired, killing every one of them. We frequently got geese, and one wet day, when a flock of over two hundred had settled, I crawled flat on the ground through the mud, and was rewarded by a shot into the midst of them, which provided us with meat for a week.

At the end of October a horse-power thresher came round,

and, as usual, we all went with it and helped one another. It was a very poor concern, owned by two big, disagreeable Scotchmen, with whom we were constantly having rows; they never seemed to care how they threshed the stuff, as much chaff coming out as wheat, and a good deal of the grain being left in the straw; in fact, it seemed, as soon as they got to a place, they tried to hurry and get it done, get their money for it, and get on to the next place. We had to put up with these fellows because we could get no other thresher to come up. It was rather hard work; we were up at four o'clock, and fed and cleaned our horses, breakfast was at six, and work was started punctually at seven. We had an hour for dinner from twelve to one, and knocked off work at six; then we had supper, and afterwards an hour's work with the horses, feeding, cleaning and fixing them up for the night. We always slept at the place at which we were working, generally taking robes and blankets and making a shakedown on the floor; sometimes there would be a bed to spare, and then there was a fight for who should sleep in it, as many as four or five squeezing into one bed. Then, in leaving a place there was always a row over the blankets; someone had got somebody else's, and then everyone had to undo their bundles to see that they were all right. Altogether we had a hard but rather a jolly time, for wherever we went we found the very best of food, and in the evening, after the work was done, there was always some kind of amusement. The stacks are always built so that the machine may get in between, and are generally built in the yard, except when they are very numerous, and then they are built in pairs in the field. It generally requires two or three to fork the sheaves, one to cut the bands, one to feed the machine, two at the spout to measure and bag the

grain, two to carry it away in the wagon, and three or four to build the straw stack.

It seems strange to people who go to Canada to have only three meals a day—breakfast at seven, dinner at twelve and supper at six o'clock; another peculiarity is that tea is drunk at every meal, indeed, it seems to be the favourite drink, barring, perhaps, whiskey.

The gardens had done very well this year; I had a nice lot of potatoes, onions and turnips; there was little demand for anything besides onions, and these I sold at a fair price. When the grain had been threshed I had two hundred and forty bushels of frozen wheat worth twenty-five cents (1s.) per bushel and three hundred bushels of oats worth thirty cents (1s. 3d.) per bushel. Of these I had to keep two hundred bushels of oats for horse feed and seed; the remainder, and the whole of the wheat, I sold at this poor price. The best wheat, of which there was very little in the country, was worth from sixty to seventy cents per bushel, which was a fair price, and those who were lucky enough to have good wheat to sell made a little bit of money. Altogether, it was a fair year for mixed farming; there had been plenty of hay, the cattle had done well, and had it not been for the summer frost, there would have been a very good yield of wheat. Oats turned out rather disappointing, not yielding what they promised, but the straw was good and made excellent feed.

By the time threshing was finished winter had fairly set in; the snow was several inches deep, and we all began to get in firewood and rails; there was no good bush anywhere near, but a few miles south was a fair-sized piece

called Skunk Bluff, but all the best of the timber had been cut out. About a mile to the west and also up north were a lot of small bluffs, and it was to these that we had to go and pick out the best that we could find.

We very seldom went to the Fort in winter, unless we were obliged to go there to sell grain. I bought a set of bob-sleighs as soon as the snow came. The bob-sleigh is two sets of runners, joined together with a reach like a wagon; the box is taken off the wagon and fixed on to it, and the same with the hay-rack, when needed.

The trail that ran by our place was frequently used by freighters taking goods from Qu'appelle Station to Touchwood and Prince Albert; some days hundreds of sleighs would go by, and horses, ponies, oxen and even cows would be loaded with all kinds of goods. At intervals along the trail enterprising men had built shanties and stables, and used them as stopping places, where some of them made a good deal of money, some of the unscrupulous ones smuggling whiskey and retailing it at enormous prices. One man, a few miles north of us, a very decent fellow who would not go in for that sort of thing, put up a large amount of hay, and by selling it in bundles to the freighters made quite a pile of money.

Fort Qu'appelle is very busy in the winter; farmers come in from miles round, bringing their wheat to be ground at the mill, all the other mills in the neighbourhood being stopped. The half-breeds, of which there are a large number, employ themselves in winter by cutting firewood and cord-wood. Cord-wood is cut into lengths of four feet and split to dry out, when it is stacked up; a cord is eight

feet long, four feet wide and four feet high, and is worth two and a half or three dollars; it is chiefly bought by the mill people, and the storekeepers and others use a great deal, as there is no coal. Hay selling is carried on largely in the winter; farmers who have no crops put up a big lot and haul it down on sleighs to the Fort, where they sell it to the livery stables or anyone who needs it; there is a large amount sold during a winter, as nearly everyone in the town keeps a horse and a cow. The Indians often come into town, a small mustang dragging them on a home-made sleigh; they dress in clothes cut out of blankets, with hoods, mocassins and mittens. The white men always wear mocassins in winter, with two or three pairs of socks, and sometimes a pair of rubber overshoes; for working round the buildings a pair of top-boots lined with felt are the best, as they do not get damp like mocassins. For the hands a pair of woollen mitts, made without fingers, with another pair over them made of leather, are worn, and are sufficiently warm for working, but when riding or driving one has to be careful, or he will get his fingers badly frozen.

It was very cold work driving to and from the bush, and we frequently got noses and ears frozen; fur caps have to be worn, which pull down well over the ears. Many people have long fur coats, made of bear, goat, or dogskin, whilst others have short mooseskin jackets, which are excellent things for riding. Round our place the trees were all poplar, a soft wood, not at all like English poplar, but in places where there are plenty of pine and spruce lumber camps are formed, and men go from the settlements; the logs that are cut are floated down some river to a sawmill and there cut up into lumber. A good axeman can make

big pay, and a man with a team may get as much as sixty dollars a month during the winter.

Christmas Day was spent much the same as at Strathelair, though we had very little amusement, but on New Year's Eve one of the settlers gave a party to which everyone was invited; it was held in his own house, a small log place, and went off very well, considering the crowded state of the room.



CHAPTER VII.

Selling Wheat—A Journey—Prohibition Laws—Sun-dogs—Phenomena—Scarcity of Timber—Snow Going—Fighting a Prairie Fire—A Wire Fence—A "Bee"—Fishing—Re-sowing Grain—A Funeral—The Valley—Extraordinary Crops—Plenty of Hay—Ready for Harvest.

Soon after the New Year we heard that frozen wheat was being bought at Qu'appelle Station, so I arranged to take a load down, in company with another fellow. We each put about sixty bushels on our sleighs and started very early one morning; as my team was the best I got a good way ahead, and arrived at the Fort about noon. I had to wait for the other fellow, and he came in an hour later with his team nearly done up; after resting for another hour we started off for the station, twenty miles distant. We had a big job getting up the hill, and were obliged to double all the way, that is, put the two teams to one load and then go back for the other. By the time we got to the top of the hill it was three o'clock, and the wind was beginning to drift the snow on to the trail; consequently, in a short time we found ourselves off the track, and floundering about in deep snow with the loads upset. The wind was getting very strong, so, seeing that a bad blizzard was coming on, we left our loads and took the horses back to the Fort, where we stayed the night; it was lucky we did so, for that night we had one of the worst blizzards of the season.

There was a very orderly crowd that night in town, owing to a raid having lately been made upon some whiskey smugglers. The Prohibition Laws were in full force, but, as in other places, they proved a failure, and were abolished in the following year. The prohibition of drink made men commit crimes to get it; and it is strange, but true, that there was less drunkenness about the place when the licenses were granted than there had been in the days of prohibition, which some of its, at one time, most ardent supporters were now ready and glad to vote against.

The next morning being fine, we started out for our loads and found them nearly covered up with snow: after digging them out we succeeded, with great difficulty, in getting on to the trail again. It was very heavy travelling, a great deal of snow having drifted, and before we had gone a couple of miles my chum had to take twenty bushels off his load, which he stacked by the side of the road. We crept on slowly, and when about two miles from the station, I had to throw off ten bushels, owing to getting stuck in a drift; and it was just getting dark when we got in and took our loads off. We stayed at an hotel all night, and early in the morning I went back for the remainder of my load. We realised twenty-five cents per bushel for the wheat, a poor price after hauling it forty miles, but it was the best we could get, and after purchasing a few things in town, we started for home. My chum's team had got lamed in a snowdrift, and he could only get as far as the Fort, where he stayed the night; I pushed on and got home very late after a terribly long and cold drive.

All through the winter we were busy cutting and hauling wood, unless the weather threatened to be boisterous.

Some very cold mornings we saw what are called "sun-dogs," that is, reflections of the sun on either side of it; they are supposed to denote the approach of rough weather, and are useful signs to travellers and hunters. Several times we saw halos round the sky with small suns at regular intervals, which phenomena have been put down as the reflection of the earth upon the sun during intensely cold weather. The thermometer frequently went down to fifty and sixty degrees below zero, and for days together we had forty degree and a strong wind, which is almost unbearable. Very often the freighters on the trail would be compelled to come over to stay the night with us, and we have had to turn the cattle out of the stables to make room for their horses. A year or two before, Lord Lonsdale went up this trail on his Arctic Expedition; he kept to the road as far as Prince Albert, where he struck off into the Great Unknown. The winter months were very monotonous, snow lying on the ground all the time, and the only work we could do was in the bush. On very fine days I started out early in the morning, taking a bundle of hay and some lunch; it generally took two or three hours to cut and trim a load of rails, and then another two to load up, get home and unload. It was a job to get any trees a foot thick, and we generally had to be content with six inches. Some nights the people in the settlement met together at the different houses for a game of cards, and these nights helped to vary the monotony.

We were naturally very glad when, about the end of March, the snow began to melt; it went very slowly, but in a few days we could see the tops of the hills bare, and little by little it went away altogether, leaving pools of water in the low places. Before the snow had been gone

many days the settlement was alarmed by a prairie fire which had sprung up a few miles south; a strong wind was blowing at the time from that quarter, and we began to make preparations to fight it; barrels of water were brought up to the houses, and everyone was armed with bunches of willows and wet clothes to beat it out. It jumped over the township fireguard, and came right towards my place; before I knew what had happened my fence was blazing away, and the fire was creeping slowly up the hill towards the buildings. Now was the time for it to be stopped, and after getting singed all over, I managed to beat it out in the most dangerous place, so that it divided and passed my place on both sides. Others escaped altogether, but one man, after fighting it for a long time, had to get in the well while the fire passed over him and burnt his house and buildings. My loss was about twenty fence-rails, and some lost all their fences. The prairie was quite black after this, and the cattle had to pick about in parts which the fire had missed, till the young grass came up again.

Soon after this we began seeding; I put in sixteen acres of oats and only two of wheat, leaving twelve acres to be summer-fallowed; last year's experience had taught us that oats paid better than frozen wheat, and so a great many had gone in for oats exclusively. After seeding I had to see to the fence and put up a new one round the field I had broken last year, so I turned the horses on to the prairie to pick up strength after the hard winter. As I intended to break some more ground shortly, I built a fence to enclose all; barbed wire was about the cheapest in the end and the most serviceable that could be got, so I bought a mile of this and put in posts twelve feet apart, and to these nailed two strands of wire, with a rail above

to show up in the dark, making the fence about four feet high. I then broke up the remainder of the ground within the fence, about six acres. Once again the mosquitoes were on us; we had hardly got over the effects of the winter before these pests came to torment our lives.

The people in Canada are very good in helping one another; if a man wants a new house or stable put up, he gets the material ready and goes round among his neighbours and asks them to come and help him on a certain day; this is called a "bee," and it is not only done for building, but for ploughing, sowing, reaping, or if a man has had a misfortune and is behind with his work, the neighbours join together and give him a day's work. If it were not for these bees it would be hard for a man to get some kinds of work done; as, for instance, building requires two or three men to work together, and a house which could be built in a day by a bee would probably take three men a fortnight, and very few farmers at the present time could afford to pay men at the high rate of wages. One man in our settlement called a bee, to which everyone went, and after a few hours' work a good looking house stood ready for occupation. Some people who have brought a little capital into the country can put up good houses and stables of sawn lumber, and are able to hire men to improve their land. These improved farms are generally found along the line of railway, but we could not boast of any up our way, though one or two of the old-established settlers had lumber houses, and were beginning to get their places into fair state of improvement.

One day after seeding a few of us went down to Fort

Qu'appelle to catch some fish; the ice had only just melted on the lakes and river, and the fish, which had been frozen up all the winter, were swimming about on the surface enjoying the sun; they were nearly all pike and weighed from four to sixteen pounds. As they came near to the surface we shot them; they gave a dive, and floated to the top on their backs, when we fished them out with poles. Some Indians were spearing them, and appeared to be very clever at it, for nearly every time they threw the spear they pulled out a long fish on the end of it. Finding that the shot from the gun spoilt the flesh of the fish, we got some lines and spoon-bait and started fishing; it was very exciting sport, very different from fishing in England, for as soon as we threw a line out and began to draw it in, a jerk was felt, and for the next two minutes we had our hands full; sometimes the fish bit the line, but as a rule we landed them fairly well. We fished in the river at its entrance into the lake, and in a couple of hours had caught forty fine fish, the largest weighing fifteen pounds; these, together with a dozen we had shot, made up the weight of the day's bag to nearly five hundred pounds. When we got home we cut most of them open and salted them, and having made a small building as air-tight as possible, smoked them. They were very good, comparing favourably with real Finnan haddies, and lasted us the whole of the summer.

The grain was just now coming up nicely, when one night a severe frost came; a good deal of the wheat was killed, and nearly everyone in the settlement had to sow oats again; this made it very late, it being the 1st of June when I finished re-sowing my oats. A few days after this one of the old settlers died, and was buried at Fort Qu'ap-

pelle; everyone in the settlement turned out with wagons and followed all the way down, and at the Fort we were joined by some of the townspeople in their best and gaudiest clothes, as if going out for a holiday. It was a queer sight for a funeral, especially when the friends and relatives of the deceased commenced to shovel the earth into the grave.

Fort Qu'appelle was at its best just then; the leaves were all out on the trees, and the steep green hills on each side of the little town with its multi-coloured buildings, enclosed on two sides by the beautiful lakes, made it a pretty sight. Plenty of well-to-do people come in summer to camp for a month by the lake shore, where bathing, boating, fishing and shooting can be indulged in to the heart's content. Fort Qu'appelle has long been a prominent post of the Hudson Bay Company; the wooden fortifications were only pulled down a year or two back. The Chief Factor of the district, Mr. Archibald McDonald, has had a varied experience in the Company's service, from the Arctic Ocean to the Boundary Line, and has had great influence over the neighbouring tribes of Indians on the occasion of any uprising. During the second Louis Riel rebellion Fort Qu'appelle was in danger of being demolished by the hostile redskins, being surrounded by them for several days, undecided to strike a blow; at last relief came, and the scene of hostilities was transferred to the north, round Battleford and Prince Albert. It is not more than twelve years since there was not a wooden building at the Fort beside the Hudson Bay Post, but when the settlers came in they found it necessary to build a billiard and whiskey saloon, which was followed in time by stores and dwelling house. The town is well situated, and if the long-promised

railway could be brought in, it would soon become a prosperous business place.

We had frequent showers of rain and the crops came on very fast, the last sown oats catching up the early ones. One man in the settlement had a field of wheat which, for strength of crop, could not be beaten. Garden stuff did exceedingly well, potatoes especially being very large and early. In the hot weather we ate little or no meat, so that the vegetables from the garden were very acceptable. The mosquitoes were worse than ever they had been before, and when, at the beginning of July, I began to summer-fallow twelve acres, it was all we could do to put up with them. I contrived to get rid of them to a certain extent by hanging a bucket of smoking chips on to the plough, but as the wind could not blow two ways at once, I was either covered with mosquitoes and the horses with the smoke, or *vice versa*.

The pic-nic on Dominion Day went off as usual and was a nice break in the summer's work. By the end of July the hay was quite ready to cut, so we at once started on it, not going up north, but cutting round home first: it was very long in some places, completely covering the horses, and necessitating us having a man to clear away the last swath before the machine could get round again. We had one or two mishaps with the machine, but happily nothing serious, and we managed to get about eighty loads of good hay. If we had not the harvest to start on we could have got a lot more: one man, having no crop, hired two men and put up six hundred tons, which he sold in the winter at five or six dollars a ton.

CHAPTER VIII.

Mounted Police - Troublesome Cattle - Going to England - British Sailors - On the Cars - Port Arthur - An Accident - Experimental Farms - Montreal - S.S. "Sardinian" - Quebec - The St. Lawrence - A Storm - Rough Voyage - Ireland - England.

The crops now demanded our whole attention, W— and I working together as usual; we first cut a field of his wheat, which was a wonderful crop, free from frost, and quite ripe and hard; so thick on the ground was it, that the binder, which usually takes a six-foot swath, became choked if more than two feet was taken, so this field alone took us nearly a week. The two acres of wheat on my place was next cut, and proved to be a good crop and free from frost. By this time the late sown oats were ready, and were really a marvellous crop, considering that they were sown on the 1st of June and reaped the first week in September, growing and ripening in the astonishingly short time of three months. It was a good crop, very thick on the ground, with good heads, but scarcely as long straw as last year.

After the crop was cut I had occasion one day to go to the Fort, and found a large body of mounted police camped there for a week's training; they were all smart fellows, well mounted, and in physique even better than the British cavalry soldier. They were mostly Englishmen, in fact, the force is largely composed of English; some people, generally Canadians, say they are the good-for-nothing class who take to this as a last resource, and though I have no doubt there are some of this kind, still, the great majority are steady fellows, and all can behave themselves

a great deal better than many civilians in the country, especially when there is whiskey in the question.

The grain which had been cut soon dried out in the sun, and was carried and stacked. We were very much troubled by some of the neighbours' cattle, which broke through the fences at sight of the tempting grain; they were so persistent in getting in to my crop, that at last I had to tickle them with a gun, after which they kept at a respectful distance.

I had a good deal of work to do this fall, for I had lately heard from England, and was obliged to go over there for a few months during the winter. The land I had broken needed backsetting, and several other jobs had to be done before I could start. Winter began rather early, and by the time I had finished backsetting the snow was on the ground; I fireguarded my place all round, made everything as secure as possible, and left my horses in charge of a neighbour, who looked after them and worked them for me. Threshing was not to be done till late, but the neighbours assured me they would look after mine in my absence, so, having booked a berth on board the Allan Line s.s. "Sardinian," sailing from Montreal, I left my place at the end of October. From the Fort I took the stage to the station, and waited there for the train, which was due at midnight. My old Strathclair chum, J—, who had been to Vancouver, was also going to England, so I wrote to him to be on the same train, but had doubts if he would get my letter in time, and as it turned out, he did not.

When I got on the train I settled myself down for a sleep, and on waking up next morning I found the car was chiefly occupied by British sailors, going home to England

on sick leave from the ships of the Pacific Squadron. They were a jolly set of fellows, and seemed to enjoy the long railway ride, and when we stopped at any station where Indians were about, they crowded round the poor redskins till they were glad to take to their heels. We stopped at a place called Broadview for breakfast, and in turn passed Brandon, Virden and Portage la Prairie, till at last we arrived at Winnipeg, where we stayed nearly two hours. Here we laid in a stock of provisions for the remainder of the journey, which were much cheaper than in the western towns. We started from Winnipeg at four o'clock, and in a short time had left the prairie province behind us and were plunging into the thick bush.

The journey, to one who had already covered the ground, seemed very monotonous, and we were glad when the interminable forest, rock and swamp was broken by some small station, where we could alight for a few minutes. By the time we arrived at Rat Portage and Keewatin it was midnight and nearly all were asleep, and on waking next morning we found ourselves close to Port Arthur. We had breakfast at that place and looked round the docks on the lake shore; the ice had not yet formed and navigation was open, a good many steamers and sailing vessels being about. We left there at ten o'clock and soon came into the rocky cuttings and tunnels along the lake shore, now and then catching a view of the lake, which at that time was getting rough. At one period of our journey we had rather an exciting time; it was along the north shore, among the big trestles, that the train was signalled to stop, and on alighting we found that a trestle in front had broken down. On the other side was a train waiting for us, with some wagons to convey the baggage across

the gap. With some trouble everything was conveyed to the other side, where we got on board the train and once more resumed our journey. By night we had left the rocky north shore, and next morning arrived at Ottawa, where we stayed some time; it was barely light as we glided out of the station and proceeded over the bridge which spans the Ottawa River, which is very wide just here.

The Government has established experimental farms in different parts of the country, for the benefit of farmers; at these farms all kinds of grain and hay seeds are grown, and the result is something for the farmers to go by when they sow their grain. Small samples of the grain and also pamphlets are sent to all who apply for them. Cattle are also kept, and it is by this means that the breeds best suited to the different parts of the country are found. The farms cost the Government a great deal of money, being kept in first-class order, but whether it would pay a man to keep his farm in that style is very doubtful. However, they are a great boon to the settlers, who thus have the different kinds of grain, hay, cattle, &c., proved for them. The farm for the North West Territories is situated at Indian Head; the Manitoba Farm at Brandon, whilst at Ottawa is situated the Central Farm, at which the professors of the various departments reside. The land is divided into plots for different kinds of grain, and chemical, botanical and other buildings are scattered round the main residence and stables.

After leaving Ottawa the track ran through a very beautiful and fertile country, passing now and again a large lake, with its sawmills and piles of logs and lumber. The trees, which were just shedding their autumn leaves, were

maple, ash and various other kinds, forming in some places an arch over the railroad. In a few hours' time we appeared to be getting near Montreal, for we passed several stations with French names, and at last came in sight of blocks of buildings and masts of ships, and in a short time drew into Montreal. Having very little baggage, I drove to one of the numerous hotels, which are chiefly French, and after a good meal walked along the wharf as far as the Britannia Tubular Bridge, one of the finest bridges in the world; it is two miles long, is laid on immense pillars of stone some distance apart, and is a most substantial structure. The "Sardinian" lay in her dock, taking in a cargo of wheat, flour and apples. Having occasion to ask my way, I accosted a dozen people along the docks before I could find one who spoke English, the city being principally inhabited by French and French Canadians. There are some beautiful buildings, the Roman Catholic Cathedral especially being very fine. The market-hall is a splendid place for fruit, and I bought a small clothes-basket full of grapes for twenty-five cents, whilst peaches, apricots, apples, and all kinds of fruit were equally cheap.

As the "Sardinian" was to start early next morning, all passengers were to be on board that evening, so having laid in a stock of things warranted to prevent sea-sickness, I went down to the dock and was shown to my cabin on board. After watching the men loading wheat, which made a fearful dust, for some time, I turned in to my bunk. Next morning the ship was in motion, and going on deck, we found ourselves steaming down the St. Lawrence River; the banks were lined with trees, broken now and again by little French villages; we were particularly struck by the number of small white Roman Catholic chapels, and

judged that there must have been one of these to every half-dozen houses. Some large country residences were scattered about among the trees, making pleasant retreats for busy Montrealers.

We were to arrive at Quebec at five p.m., and were to stay there all night, but it was much earlier than that when we came in sight of the frowning fortress, and after exchanging salutes, we drew up alongside the wharf, directly under the Citadel. As soon as the gangway was across, several of us went on shore, and going up the steep hill into the lower town, climbed up on to the walls, from whence we had a splendid view of the river, the Heights of Abraham, the scene of Wolfe's great victory, and in the far distance the Falls of Montmorenci, after which we went over the Citadel, and recognised its impregnable defences. A short time before we were there a large portion of overhanging rock had fallen on to some cottages beneath, and had buried a great number of the inhabitants; they were still clearing away the *débris*, and continually finding bodies. After looking over the Citadel we had tea on board and walked up through the lower town to the upper town, more than a mile away; this is the quarter inhabited by the English, and contains some good buildings and shops. Having explored the town we made our way back to the ship, taking care in going through the low French quarter to keep a good look-out, for it is said to be a terrible place for thieves at night.

On getting up next morning we found the hawsers being let go, and very soon we were off, passing the Dominion Line s.s. "Vancouver," which had just arrived, reporting terrible seas outside the river; indeed, she looked as though

she had been knocked about, and we left her with anything but a nice prospect before us. There was a good deal of navigation on the river, which began to get very wide, but was still quite calm, and, it being Sunday, a service was held in the saloon. That night we had a good sleep, for we had a presentiment that our resting place might not be so steady for the next few nights.

The next day was much colder and the ship began to pitch a little as we got out into the Gulf; we had passed the towns of Trois Rivières and Rimouski, and now the shores on either side were scarcely visible. In the afternoon it got still colder, the waves grew larger, and the sailors began to make everything secure; the wind was blowing hard from the east, right in our teeth, and very soon it began to snow. Being on deck, I happened to hear one of the men say that the captain was very anxious about getting through the Straits of Belle Isle before dark, and as we were still some distance off and night was coming on, it looked as though we might have some trouble in getting through. I went down to tea, but feeling rather bad, came back on deck; a terrific snowstorm was blowing in our face, and the ship was pitching and rolling on the enormous waves, which continually dashed over her. Occasionally a rocket was sent up, and it seemed as if they were not quite certain of the position of the ship. Just then a sailor came along and told me to go downstairs; I went down, got into my bunk, and, sea-sickness coming on, soon forgot about the wild scene on deck. Morning came and we knew that we were safe; the ship had got through the Straits, thanks to the knowledge of the captain and officers, but had encountered a severe storm outside, and for two days we were kept in the cabins, whilst the waves dashed

over the ship, threatening to break her up. On the third day the wind went down and we got on deck, where we beheld a grand sight; there were no breakers, but the sea seemed to be in immense moving mountains, caused by the enormous rollers. Now and then, as we ascended one of these mountains of green water, we caught sight of another vessel some distance away, the next moment sinking down into a large hollow. In the fresh air we soon got right, but many people, anxious for a walk along the deck, got an occasional ducking as a large wave came over the side.

The sea gradually calmed down, and by the time we were nearing Ireland the weather was very enjoyable. It was on a Tuesday evening that we first sighted the coast of Ireland, and about ten o'clock rockets were sent up, and we found ourselves outside Moville, where a pilot came on board. Early next morning we came in sight of the Isle of Man, and passed several towns on the south coast of that island. The water now began to change from blue to yellow, and we soon began to see plenty of shipping, passing several outward-bound Atlantic liners. About four o'clock we caught sight of England through the fog, and before long were steaming up the Mersey, among a crowd of other vessels.

The anchor was dropped, the tender came alongside, we were turned inside out by the Customs officers, and turning our backs on the old "Sardinian," which had brought us safely across, we were soon put on English soil.

CHAPTER IX.

S.S. "Parisian"—Lough Foyle—Seasickness—The Voyage—A New Line—Cooking—Ice-cream—A Thief—A Stay in Winnipeg—Selling Grain—A Filly—Moving a House—Road-work—Start South—Sunbeam Farm—The Camp—Indian Head.

After spending an enjoyable time in England I booked a passage on board the Allan Line s.s. "Parisian." J—, who had been in England, was going back on the same boat, and also a fellow named P—, who lived on the Manitoulin Island in Lake Huron; there were also three other fellows in our party, one of whom was in our four-bunk cabin, so that we had plenty of company on the voyage. The "Parisian" sailed on March 24th from her dock, where she had been laid up for repairs; it took some time to get clear of the docks, and then, steaming out to sea, we soon lost sight of England in the gathering darkness. Those of us who had been out before soon settled down in our cabins, and turned in early to get a good sleep while we could.

Next morning we were off the coast of Ireland; the sea was rather choppy and many people were having their first taste of sea-sickness, so that we were not sorry when we turned into Lough Foyle, where the mails and passengers awaited us. A boat-load of people went on shore at Moville, but we did not hear about it in time. Having taken everything on board, the ship was swung round and headed for the Far West.

As we got some distance from the coast of Ireland, the

sea got a great deal rougher, and the passengers one by one retreated down the companion. We four fellows in our berth tried to keep ourselves up, but getting tired of walking about, stretched ourselves out on the deck. It got very rough and cold, so J— and I, leaving the other two sick on deck, crept down to our berth, and tumbled into the two lower bunks. Presently one of the others came down, and seeing the lower bunks full, tried to scramble into one of the upper ones, but, together with his half-dead state and the rolling of the ship, he was obliged to give up the attempt and contented himself with lying on the floor. The other fellow came in soon after; he made no attempt to get into bed, but sank down on his knees and lay beside his companion.

After lying for some hours in misery we at last got to sleep, but were soon awake by a noise of broken crockery; looking out, we saw our two chums rolling about on the floor among pieces of water-jugs and basins, whilst hats, boots and towels were swimming about in the water that had been spilt. The steward heard the noise and came in and helped the other two into bed: we lay there all that day, but the following morning the wind dropped, and we got on deck, where we speedily recovered.

The voyage was very uneventful: two or three ships, a whale and a few porpoises being the only things we saw. These porpoises follow the ship for miles, picking up any scraps that are thrown overboard. We had the usual kind of fare on board the "Parisian," and for second cabin it was not at all bad: a concert was held, both in the saloon and the second cabin, for the benefit of the Seamen's Orphanage. On the ninth day after leaving Liverpool we

came in sight of land, and in a short time steamed into Halifax harbour; it was evening, and we had to wait in the shed on the wharf until next morning before a train came for us. We had time to take a little walk, but as the streets round the wharf were nearly a foot deep in mud and we could find no place to cross, we went back to the dock, where we found the "Parisian" had discharged our baggage, and was just starting off for Portland, Maine, her destination.

At last the train came and we took our seats; we got into a good car and settled ourselves down and at once started to cook our breakfast; we had brought a kettle and pot with us, also a good supply of food, tea, &c., and the stove in the car was almost entirely monopolised by our cooking. Since I came this way before, the old Intercolonial line, by way of Quebec, had been superseded by a new line direct to Montreal, built by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, cutting through the northern part of the State of Maine, and passing the town of St. John, New Brunswick. After leaving the latter place the country became very hilly, with heavy bush, and continued so for some distance through the State. At every station we got out to look round, and altogether the journey passed very pleasantly till, on the second evening after leaving Halifax, we crossed the St. Lawrence and arrived at Montreal.

We had to change cars there, and on getting into a good comfortable place were annoyed to find a lot of Scandinavians and Russian Jews come in after us. These people are generally kept by themselves, as indeed they need to be, and the English people in the car soon made up their minds to have them shifted, for the place was becoming

unbearable; the conductor could not persuade them to go into a car by themselves, so at one station a charge was made, and very soon, after a short fight, we had the car free of them.

The train started from Montreal at midnight, and next morning arrived at Ottawa. That night we got to Sudbury Junction, where P— and another fellow left us, on their way to Manitoulin Island. Next morning we found ourselves on the north shore of Lake Superior, and, it being a fine day, we sat on the steps of the car enjoying the fresh air and beautiful scenery. Port Arthur was reached about noon; the ice had not yet thawed off the lake, and the River Kaministiquia, which flows into the lake here, was blocked with pieces of ice, which had thawed up in the bush and floated down. In the following year the river was full of ice, which carried away several bridges and landing stages, and did a great deal of damage. It was in the month of May, and the wind, blowing off the lake, caused this ice-jam at the mouth of the river, which was very high at the time.

The following day we came to Rat Portage, where we had a walk along the shore of the Lake of the Woods, out of which some Indians were pulling fish as fast as they were able. At a small station some distance further on a man got on the car to sell some apples, and seeing a young fellow take out his purse, snatched it out of his hand and bolted out of the car; there was soon a big crowd after him, and a regular chase was made, but though some took a shot at him, he got away to the bush.

Next morning we came out on to the prairie; the snow

had nearly all gone, but the water lay all over this low ground, causing it to resemble an immense lake. On arrival at Winnipeg we made up our minds to stay there a day and go west on next day's train, so crossing over to the Clifton House, a good hotel on Main Street, we had a good wash and dinner and started out to explore the town, which, considering its age, cannot be beaten. We were accosted several times and offered work at good wages, and some fellows who came across with us obtained good employment on farms and ranches. Once a gang of Yankees stopped us and tried to bribe us to cross the line, but we knew all about their game, so we employed ourselves in watching them for a time, and warning others whom they accosted. We heard afterwards that they wanted to riddle us, but we left by next morning's train, and arrived at Qu'appelle early the following morning. J— was going on to Vancouver, so, taking the stage, I got to Fort Qu'appelle at dinner-time, and found my friend had brought my team down to meet me; they were looking well and seemed none the worse for the winter.

I found my place just as I had left it; the snow had not yet all thawed off the fields, so we could not expect to begin seeding for another week at least. In my absence the neighbours had done my threshing, and had turned out forty bushels of wheat and five hundred bushels of oats, which sold at fifteen cents per bushel; those who had wheat for sale obtained forty-five to fifty cents per bushel. There being some little time left till seeding, I set to work and got a supply of wood ready for the summer; the snow began to go off nicely, when one day we had a bad storm, and a few inches more of snow was left on the ground. I was anxious to get my seeding done as soon as possible, so as

soon as the ground was sufficiently dry, I started to put in ten acres of wheat, after which I put in twelve acres of oats on last year's summer-fallow, and then put some more oats on the remaining thirteen acres, making altogether thirty-five acres of crop. One day, having gone to the bush for a load of wood, I had occasion to light a fire to prepare some tea; I had burnt a patch a good way round to prevent the fire from spreading and had gone back to my work, when a strong wind came suddenly across the prairie, and caught hold of the flames of my fire, setting alight the grass half a dozen yards away; there was soon a big blaze, but happily it went in the direction in which I knew there were no settlers within a hundred miles: still, it would soon have traversed that distance, had there not been a river to stop it.

After seeding, several of us went to the Fort for a day's fishing, and made a good haul. The Fort was rather quiet that day, and in the absence of the usual noise and rabble seemed to have improved a great deal. About this time one of my mares foaled a fine filly; I soon turned them on to the prairie, where the mother picked up flesh, and the foal grew strong and healthy; in this part of the country a foal, having fairly got a start, can put up with many inconveniences, and it is a good thing, for it is a frequent sight to see a colt only a few days old running beside its mother in the wagon or plough. Not being able to do much with one horse, I let both go, and set to work to do up the fences and other odd jobs, for I intended, when the horses had had a month's rest, to go down south to some place along the line, and there get work for the summer. Whilst I was repairing the fences a neighbour came up and asked me to attend a bee at his place next day: he

had bought a frame house from a man who was leaving, some three miles away; it could not be taken to pieces, so in the winter, whilst the snow was not too deep, he had managed to hoist it on to sleigh-runners, and with two teams of oxen had drawn it across the prairie to within a short distance of his place, where he was obliged to leave it, and now he wanted all the men in the settlement to get it fixed in its proper place. Nearly twenty turned up, with chains, ropes, levers and all kinds of implements, and at once began to make rollers, which were placed under the building, and with considerable difficulty we got it to move, very slowly at first, but in time the distance was covered. We had two hard days at it, and on the evening of the second got it fixed, much to the satisfaction of the owner and ourselves.

Every year the Municipal Council expended a certain sum in each district upon the roads and bridges, the work to be done by the settlers in the locality, who received two and a half dollars a day for a man and team, and one dollar a day for a man alone. This year we had four days of it on the main trail near us, which was badly in need of grading. One or two teams are set to plough a piece, whilst others scrape what has been ploughed on to the grade, the others being employed in loading wagons and levelling the grade; the farmers are very glad to get a few days of this work, for the money is very acceptable in this country.

Having disposed of most of my oats at the poor price of fifteen cents per bushel, I got my team ready to start south in search of work; both mares were in good condition, and the filly was particularly strong and lively. Getting together a few shirts, socks and boots, with ropes,

axes, &c., we started early one morning, and going slowly, got to the Fort in the afternoon. There was very little doing there, and I was advised to go to Qu'appelle Station, so I struck out that way, camping for the night at the half-way house, where I was nearly eaten by mosquitoes. The next morning was very wet, but we started off again in good time, and got to Qu'appelle Station before noon; I made enquiries about work, and was advised to go to Mr. McLain, manager of Lord Brassey's Sunbeam Farm, which is situated at Indian Head. I found him in town and contracted with him to break his land at two and a half dollars an acre, keeping myself and team. I had got a new plough, well suited for the work, and started off after dinner for the Sunbeam Farm, about eight miles east of Qu'appelle, and one mile south-west of Indian Head; the trail ran alongside the railway track nearly all the way. Round Qu'appelle the country was very hilly and a good many bluffs and bushes were scattered about, but as we got nearer to Indian Head these all disappeared, and the prairie became quite flat, the railway line being seen across the plain as far as the eye could reach.

Before coming to Indian Head I saw a lot of teams ploughing, and took this to be the Sunbeam Farm, so I went up and found a small rough frame building, used as a sleeping and cooking place. The man cook was inside getting ready for supper, so, having unhitched my team and picketed them out on some good grass, I went back to the shack, as it was called, and waited for the meal. The place was built of boards, which had cracked and shrunk in the sun till the daylight came in all round; it was about twenty-five feet square, and had a window on two sides, whilst along one side were the bunks, two deep; the table ran

across the room, and a plank on each side of it served as the seats, whilst the side opposite to the bunks was used for keeping oats and feed for the teams; there was no flooring besides the solid earth, and when it rained through the cracks the mud was several inches deep. The stove, which was near the door and was very dirty, was loaded with kettles and frying pans containing bacon and potatoes, which was the chief, and very often, the only dish at every meal. For living in this camp each man had to pay fifty cents a day out of his earnings, rather a big price for such accommodation and such food, for our cook knew as much about his work as the worst among us, and invariably burnt the bacon and potatoes.

About six o'clock, having finished the day's work and put their teams out to feed, the men came trooping in to supper; there were nearly twenty altogether, mostly Canadians. Seeing a new comer they at once began to ask questions—where I came from, what kind of a team I had got, and what price I paid for them? They were a very good lot of fellows, but I could see that one or two were not on very good terms with the rest, and was rather surprised to see a number of pistols about. After supper we had a look round the teams; they were all tethered out on the good grass and were looking well; most of them were horses, the rest oxen, the latter being turned loose every night. On returning to the camp at dark we found most of the men asleep, so I picked out a vacant bunk and got in; in the bunk was a bit of hay and a blanket, so, taking off my coat for a pillow, I rolled myself in the blanket and was soon asleep.

CHAPTER X.

The Ploughing—Horses Lost—A Tramp—The Search—Borrowing a Broncho—
The Mission—The Prairie Fire—Burns—No News—Found—The Bell Farm
— Hot Weather—Bathing—The Pic-nic—A Quarrel—Half-breeds—The
Experimental Farm.

We were up at half-past four, and got our horses ready; breakfast was at six, and after that we went out to work. Each man had a piece pegged out to himself; the furrows were one mile in length, and the prairie was perfectly flat, with scarcely a tree or bush to be seen. I started at seven o'clock and made two rounds before dinner; we always reckoned four rounds and a quarter to make an acre, taking a furrow twelve inches wide. At dinner time we took an hour's rest, and partook of the usual meal of bacon and potatoes, with tea, without milk, and which was always too strong to drink. Outside the camp was a bench with basins for washing, and it was a recognised rule that the last man up in the morning should fetch the day's washing water from a slough some distance away. On resuming work after dinner I got on very well; the sod only needed to be ploughed very lightly, two inches being enough, so that at six o'clock I had done three more rounds, making five for the whole day. It was very hot work and much harder than the ordinary ploughing, and by the time a man had done five rounds, which meant over ten miles, walking, he was pretty tired and ready for his night's rest, and so I began to look on my humble bunk as a comfortable couch.

I did five more rounds next day and after supper went with one of the fellows into Indian Head; it was Saturday night and a good many people were in the town, chiefly men off the big farms in the neighbourhood and a few cowboys from the ranches. Indian Head is a little larger than Fort Qu'appelle, and has much better buildings, many of them being built of brick and stone; there are several good stores, and three saloons, which appeared to be doing a roaring trade. The railway station and goods sheds are some little distance from the town: all the station-houses on the C.P.R. are built of lumber, painted red with white facings, and are good substantial structures. In the town I came across two fellows from Fort Qu'appelle who were working there for a time; they thought it a good deal worse than the Fort in many respects, and were getting tired of it. Happening to pass one of the saloons, we saw a mounted policeman engaged in a row with two drunken cowboys; we were expecting to see pistols drawn, but they kept them down, and some others going to the rescue, the cowboys were soon locked up, and next morning were brought before the local magistrate. That night, on arriving back at the camp, we found our teams all right, and turned in; there was still one more man to come, but we did not expect him until after the saloons closed.

The next day being Sunday, we did not get up until seven, and on going to look after the horses, found they had disappeared; on closer inspection we discovered most of the picket ropes left, but every horse in the camp was missing. It afterwards transpired that the man who was out last, and who came home perfectly sober, had gone to look at his team and had changed one of their pickets, when the horse suddenly gave a jump and got away from him,

and the other horses, seeing it loose, began to run round till they all broke either their ropes or halters. A search was at once begun, and a few miles away we came across the band feeding, but to my dismay I found that mine were not with them; I soon made up my mind that they would naturally strike out for home, where I must at once follow them. Taking a bit of food, I started out in the direction in which I knew the Fort lay: the sun was terribly hot, and as I walked through the long grass the mosquitoes rose up in swarms, biting my face and hands till they became perfectly unendurable. After two hours' walking I came to the trail which runs between Indian Head and the Fort, where I was overtaken by a wagon, in which I got a ride for a couple of miles: by this time I had come half the distance to the Fort, and as a little breeze was blowing, walking became more tolerable. Some four miles from the Fort I came to a house, where I stayed some time and had a meal: the man said he had seen some horses go by that morning, which encouraged me in my belief that they had struck out for home: the wind also was coming from the north, and in summer, when the mosquitoes are bad, horses and cattle will invariably travel against the wind, thus, to a certain extent ridding themselves of their tormentors.

On arriving at the Fort I was thoroughly tired out, and hearing no news of my team, I borrowed a broncho pony and set out for home, keeping a good look-out on all sides: several times I saw objects in the distance, but on riding up found them to be other bands of horses. On getting home I went all round the settlement, but from each person got the same answer, that nothing had been seen of the team. Then I was in a hole: for a team of horses strange

to the country not to make for home with the wind favourable was an inexplicable mystery, and I was quite at a loss to know where to look next. I stayed at my place that night, and went back to the Fort next morning, scouring the country on either side. The most probable place, I now thought, was Qu'appelle Station, or the half-way house where we had camped, so I set out with a man who was driving down, calling at the latter place on the way. I gave information at the station, and warned people to look out, and then started to walk along the trail in the direction of Indian Head; several times I saw bands of horses, but no trace of my own among them.

It was quite dark when I got back to camp, where they had been constantly on the watch; on the day I left they had all turned out and had searched round the neighbourhood, coming across a man who had seen a team answering to their description heading north early in the morning; but that was the only information that could be obtained. One of the fellows in camp, having a broncho to spare, kindly lent it me to hunt about till I could find my own horses, and the following morning I struck out for the Qu'appelle Valley, where I came across a large horse ranche. I enquired of the cowboys in charge, but could get no news, so, having camped for dinner with them, I started off again and soon came to the Mission. This is a large brick building, principally used for training and educating Indian children, who are taught many subjects in the English language, as well as all kinds of trades; it is run by the Roman Catholic Mission, and does some very good work, a great many children, by its means, having been educated and put into good positions. They have even tried to improve the elder generation of Indians, but this has been

more or less a failure, and they have come to the conclusion that the only way to improve the race at all is to start on the young ones.

From the Mission I struck north-east, and night coming on, found myself in a strange part; so, picking out a spot with some good grass and water, I picketed my horse and lit a fire to prepare some tea, after which, using the saddle as a pillow and the saddle-cloth as a coverlet, I had a good sleep till daylight. After a little bit of food, a supply of which I had brought in my pack, I started out again, this time going east. The grass round here had not been burnt for some years, and I was just thinking what a good blaze it would make, when I became aware of a fire on the horizon; the wind was coming from that direction, but I took little notice of it, as I made sure I should find some place to get through or round it, so kept on until it was within a short distance of me. A band of horses was running before it, and they seemed to have hard work to keep far in front of it. I was disappointed in not seeing a place to get through, for it stretched several miles across the prairie, and I was about to turn back when a foolish idea came into my head. I had often heard of fellows riding through big fires, and as this appeared to be a very small one, I looked out for a place where the grass was shorter than usual, and waited for it to come up. When within a short distance I spurred my horse, and we made a rush. I soon began to regret it, for as we came to the fire a large flame sprang up, as if on purpose, licking round my legs and body; in a few moments, which seemed like minutes, we were through, but the other side was all charred and still very hot, whilst the smoke was suffocating, and my legs were in such pain that I could scarcely sit in the saddle,

so when we had got to a good distance we stopped. With difficulty I got off my horse and was glad to find him uninjured, some of the hairs on the flanks only being singed. Part of the saddle-cloth and the legs of my trousers were burnt, whilst my shirt and hat had not suffered much; my legs were very sore, and my face and arms seemed to be burning. I tried to find a slough of water to bathe, but the prairie was perfectly flat as far as the eye could reach, so we pushed on slowly, and at last came to a settler's house, where I stayed that day and night, and had some oil put on my burns.

The next morning I started for home, hoping that by this time the horses would have got there, but when I arrived, after a hard day's riding, there was no sign of them, nor had anyone seen or heard of them. I had now been out a week, and began to think they had been stolen and driven south over the line into the States, when I heard from a man that they had been seen near Qu'appelle Station, so I at once set out for that place, only to find that they were not mine after all. I had not yet been far south in search of them, but I now set out in that direction, passing through an unsettled country, with patches of good ranching land. For the remainder of the week I was hunting about through a strange tract of country, sleeping out at nights, and dropping in for a meal at any house I came to, when one day I came across a man who had just seen a team of big mares and a foal go into a farm some distance away; I went in the direction he named, and there found that they were mine; they were evidently enjoying themselves, and were not many miles from the place where they had disappeared, but in this vast country hunting for horses may be compared to searching for a needle in a haystack.

I was very glad now that I had recovered them, especially as they looked so well, and undoubtedly the fortnight's holiday had been a good thing for them, although a bad time for me. We lost no time in getting back to the camp, where they had begun to think we had gone for good; the man who had unknowingly been the cause of my team escaping gave me two days' work in consideration of the loss of time I had sustained, and I got on at a good pace, averaging an acre and a half a day.

A little over a mile from the Sunbeam Camp, on the other side of the railway, is situated the famous Bell Farm, now owned by Major Bell; at one time it belonged to an English syndicate and consisted of one hundred square miles of land, but since it has become the property of Major Bell, large tracts have been sold to the Brassey and Sunbeam Farms, whilst the Government Experimental Farm occupies one square mile, and the number of teams and implements has been reduced. The residence and stables are built of concrete, whilst the granary and implement sheds are of lumber. Major Bell has distributed his men and teams all over the farm, so that each man has a small cottage to live in, and one hundred and sixty acres to look after; he is entitled to a small piece of garden land, and can keep a cow for his own use.

We were having some very hot weather, and the mosquitoes were very bad in the camp at night, necessitating buckets of smoking chips being placed inside the shack. Half a mile from camp, at the end of the ploughing, was a large dam; it was originally a deep ravine, but had been well dammed up, and now a large sheet of water had gathered to the depth of fifteen feet at the deeper end. Every day



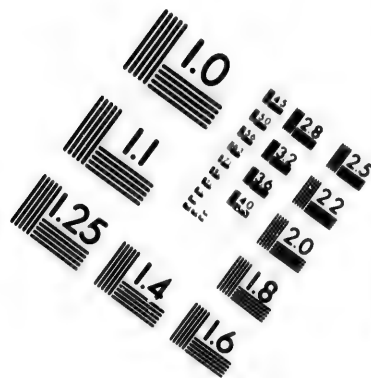
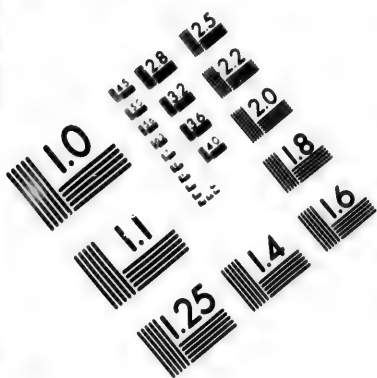
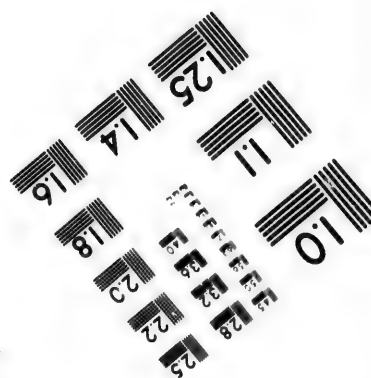
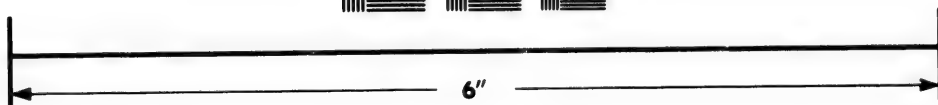
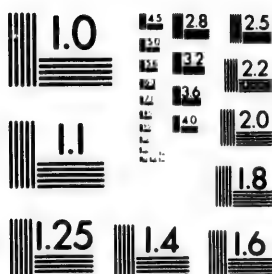


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after dinner, before re-starting work, we went there for a dip; it was very refreshing on hot days, and was the only opportunity we had of taking off our clothes, for we never stripped anything more than our coats at night; our horses enjoyed a swim as much as ourselves, and would wade right in to get a drink at dinner-time. The only drawback to the water was that in the middle of the day it was full of snakes, which seemed to like the cool water, but are rather unpleasant things to run up against. On Sundays we seldom got up till eight, and after seeing to the horses had breakfast about half-past nine; many of the men, who lived in the neighbourhood, went home in the morning; the rest of us occupied ourselves by reading, writing letters, or shaving and cutting one another's hair. In the afternoon we all took our dirty clothes up to the dam and washed them, after which we swam about while they were drying in the hot sun, and then put them on. At night, after looking up our teams, we generally walked into Indian Head, where a service was sometimes held.

By the 1st of July, Dominion Day, I had done twenty acres, and that being pic-nic day up in the settlement, I arranged with two other fellows to go up; so, the day before, Friday, I left off work at noon, giving the horses a good rest, and started for the north at eleven o'clock that night. It was very cool, and the stars were very bright, and soon after passing through the Bell Farm the day began to break, and by the time we reached the Fort the sun was up; but the people did not seem to be, so we camped for breakfast by the side of the river. We arrived at the settlement before dinner, and having made ourselves respectable, went over to the pic-nic, where we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves after the rough camp life. The next day,

Sunday, we started back early, and after camping for an hour at the Fort, arrived at Indian Head late at night, and found the men all asleep, so, after putting up the horses, we soon followed their example.

I was awake next morning by hearing high words, and looking out, saw one of our bullies having a row with another fellow who was lying in his bunk: they were both in a passion, and the man in the bunk pulled one of his long boots off and pitched it at the other, and he, picking it up, flung it back with all his strength, and struck the man in the bunk between the eyes with the heavy heel, cutting his head open. The man thought he had killed him, and made a bolt; one man took a shot at him, but he got away and went east, so that we saw nothing of him again. The other man recovered in a short time, but had a terrible gash in his forehead.

We had several half-breeds on the farm employed in picking stones, and some of these fellows played the fiddle very well; they did not live in the camp, but had tents outside. We often got them in to give us a tune at night, but they would rather stay in their own tents and play cards among themselves. One could not help noticing the great difference between the English and French half-breeds, the former being much larger in stature and steady, quiet fellows, whilst the others were always ready for card-playing and gambling: both look down upon the poor red-skin, and try to imitate the white man.

One Sunday several of us walked over to the Experimental Farm, a little way east of Indian Head, and went over the land and stables; the latter are kept wonderfully clean,

and the well-bred animals inside are always well groomed and kept in the pink of condition; the land was free from weeds, and everything looked as though no money had been spared to make it as a model farm should be. All round the place within the fence were planted numbers of young trees, and several apple and other fruit trees were being tried; the crops looked well, and showed the care and attention bestowed on them.

The six hundred and forty acres of breaking on the Sunbeam Farm was now finished, and we had to start to plough up some land that had once been broken, but had since run to grass: as this had to be ploughed a little deeper, we got twenty-five cents an acre extra; the furrows were only a quarter of a mile long, and the many teams employed soon made an improvement in it.



CHAPTER XI.

A Sun-dance—Trouble—A Thunderstorm—Brassey and Sunbeam Farms—Stone Stable—Indian Pow-wow—Start for Home—The Harvest—Smudging Wheat—Good Crops—Geese—Wheat Frozen—Agricultural Show

One Sunday in July an Indian Sun Dance was to take place on the reservation a few miles south of Indian Head; two other fellows from the camp were going down, so we borrowed three bronchos, and I arranged to go with them. On the way down we passed some other fellows who were evidently out for a bit of fun, and had a lot of whiskey with them; we could see that it would be best to keep a good distance from them, for they were sure to get into trouble, and we didn't care to be mixed up in it. When we came to the Indian Reserve we found a lot of tents, and in one place a crowd of redskins in full war paint formed in a large circle, in the centre of which stood a strong log, upright in the ground. Presently a young Indian warrior, nearly naked except for the streaks of multi-coloured paint, came out into the ring. A rope hung from the pole in the centre, and at the end of it were two strings of buffalo hide. One of the old braves then came forward and put a strong skewer through the flesh on the young man's breast, and fastened the two strings of hide to each end of the skewer, so that he was now standing at some distance from the pole, with the rope pulled tight and fastened to his breast by the hides and skewer. Then the people round began to make a low wailing noise, and at the same time

the poor wretch on the rope threw himself backwards and forwards in his endeavours to tear away the flesh and let himself loose. For several hours this continued, the crowd yelling and cheering the sufferer on to fresh efforts, and he, his breast nearly torn through, was throwing himself about and ready to drop from pain and fatigue; but he dare not give in and for ever afterwards be disgraced; and so he kept on, till even the admiring crowds of Indians must have felt ill at the sight. At last, with a mighty effort, he threw himself back; the rope flew back to the post, and he was left unconscious on the ground. A medicine man came to heal his wounds, and he was taken out to sit in the sun till it sank in the west. All this pluck, endurance and determination is wasted on an old religious superstition that no man can be called a brave until he submits to go through this ordeal.

We were glad there was to be no more of it, and got our horses and were preparing to start, when we saw the men we had passed on the way surrounded by a crowd of drunken Indians, some of whom were brandishing knives; we rode up to see what had happened, and at that moment one of the white men drew his revolver and fired at the nearest Indian, who fell apparently dead. In the confusion the white men got through the crowd, and got their horses and rode off, we followed at once, for the redskins seemed disposed to wreak their vengeance on us, and actually fired at us. The matter was hushed up, as the deed was done in self-defence, but it was a warning to playful persons not to give spirits to the Indians, which is strictly forbidden by law.

The mosquitoes, which had been bad during June and

July, had almost entirely disappeared, and we found life much pleasanter in the camp. Our shack was not built to withstand much heavy weather, therefore we were rather dismayed when one day we saw a tremendous thunderstorm coming. However, we covered up the bunks as well as we could, and waited for it; all at once it was upon us; the wind tore up several boards of the roof, and a deluge of rain poured through every crack and hole, till the floor of the place was two inches deep with water, and when at last the storm passed over, we had not a dry thing in the camp. However, as usual after storms in this country, the sun came out as strong as ever and we got our things out and had them dry by night. There was no more ploughing to be done now, except the backsetting of that which had been broken early, so I was set on to a piece of this: luckily it was a piece that had been well ploughed before, and it being fairly rotten, I was able to make a good job of it: it was much easier work than breaking, and nearly two acres a day could be done.

About this time a band of Germans came to work on the farm; they did not live in the camp, but existed outside as cheaply as they could, and seemed to think only of the money they were earning, without a thought for the poor half-starved horses they were driving to death. If there is one thing a Canadian dislikes, it is to see a horse worked to death and cruelly treated: so that we got disgusted with them, and at last spoke to the boss about it. He, a typical Yankee, went straight down to them and threatened to blow every man's brains out unless they took more care of their horses, and would have turned them off the place at once had they not promised to work three horses to a plough instead of two. We who worked near them always

made it a point to go and take their horses out if they did not stop work at the time we did, and many a feed of oats did our fellows give their horses when they came round hunting for food.

The wheat on the Brassey Farm, adjoining the Sunbeam, and on the Bell Farm was beginning to ripen. The Brassey and Sunbeam Farms are owned by an English syndicate, at the head of which is Lord Brassey; it is intended to promote emigration, and will in the future let out pieces of the land to intending settlers. The land was bought from the Bell Farming Company, and consists of over twelve square miles, all of which in time is to be brought under cultivation.

I had now finished backsetting my piece, and as harvest would soon be coming on, and my horses had done very well, I gave them a rest, while I looked out for a job for myself for a few weeks. A large stone stable was to be built near the shack; the holes had been dug for the foundations, and the contractor was about to commence, so I got a job from him at the rate of a dollar and three-quarters a day. I found it very hard work, and on hot days we had a job to keep going, owing to the scarcity of good drinking water round the place: my duty was to keep the masons supplied with stones, handing them up and helping to put them in place, and, when I had time, to break and face the stones, and help carry mortar; the consequence was that I had my hands full, and didn't have much time to look round.

About the middle of August there was a big pic-nic at Qu'appelle Station; the day was made the occasion for a general holiday on the Sunbeam, and most of us went over.

They had all kinds of sports, horse races, and an Indian pow-wow, a strange kind of dance; a lot of half-naked warriors sit round in a circle and begin to make a noise; some play drums, and others had different kinds of implements with which they try to outdo one another; when they are tired of this, they go and beg all kinds of eatables, biscuits, sugar and tea, which is all placed in the centre. Then the oldest and ugliest of the tribe comes round and divides it equally among them, generally looking after his own share carefully, and what is left, if there is any, is given to the squaws and youngsters, who sit and look on in silent admiration of their lords and masters; from the amount they eat, one would imagine that they starved from one pow-wow to another.

The crops on the different farms in the neighbourhood were nearly ripe, and I thought it was fully time to start for home; I had earned a nice little bit of money; after my board was deducted I drew a cheque for \$110 from the Sunbeam Farm, and another of \$15 from the stable contractor. My team had picked up a lot during their rest, and the filly, which had stood the summer well, was as good as any foal that had been running out all the summer.

Having collected all my things together, I started out one hot morning, calling at Indian Head, and then passing on through the Bell Farm, where they had begun to cut the wheat; in one field of six hundred and forty acres there were no less than fifteen binders winding round the field, and over thirty men following and setting up the sheaves in shocks. It was a very good crop, and should have been worth a considerable sum to the owner. By dinner-time I got to the Fort, where there were a good

many fellows from the settlement, harvest not having commenced up there; the lakes and trees looked splendid, a great contrast to the flat, bare plain I had just left. I arrived home in good time and found everything right; the crops were hardly ripe, so I should have plenty of time to get a bit of hay. The heavy storm which we experienced at Indian Head had done even more damage up here; several stable and granary roofs had been blown off, and one man had the roof lifted clean off his house and deposited several yards away.

I started as soon as I could to cut some hay, and got ten loads before the crops were ready to cut; the summer frosts had not yet come, and we began to hope we had escaped them. Several settlers in the neighbourhood had of late years been trying to overcome these summer frosts by burning heaps of wet straw or manure round the fields, so that a cloud of smoke lay over the crop and kept the frost and sun off, for it is really the early sun coming after the frost which does the damage and shrivels up the grain. It has been much debated whether this really prevents the grain from being frozen, but from what I have seen I should say it does to a considerable extent.

The binder did not withstand the strain of the heavy crop last year, and we had to get several new cog-wheels and chains, and with these it was as good as ever, and we at once started on one of my fields of oats, which had ripened before any; it was a grand crop, just ripe, and took some time to cut. W—'s oats were the next ready, after which his wheat was cut. The wheat in this neighbourhood was not nearly such a good crop as that round Indian Head, although one or two small pieces were fairly good; my own wheat was not a bad crop, but from being sown on last

year's breaking, was much later than the rest, the consequence being that the frost came just as we were cutting it, spoiling the greater portion; my other field of oats was a poor crop, and this I attributed to the seed, which was a new variety, and evidently not quite suited to the country.

The weather was very hot, and the corn did not take long to dry, but before we stacked it we had some good sport with the geese and cranes, which settled in large flocks on the fields; the shocks made good cover for stalking, and we often managed to creep up within fifty yards, and discharge the two barrels into the middle of the flock, bringing down three or four at a time. At the Fort the sportsmen were having good times with the ducks on the lake, some going out for the day and bringing back several hundred, which they gave away or exchanged to the farmers for vegetables. The stacking of the grain was always a light job with us, for we had two wagons, and could bring in a good many loads in the course of a day. The Canadians never take much trouble in building their stacks, consequently, if there is much rain the grain gets wet and is spoilt; luckily there seldom is much rain in the fall of the year, or half the stacks in the country would be ruined.

Every year, during the month of October, the Fort Qu'Appelle Agricultural Society holds a show, at which there is always a good display of grain, roots, and cattle and horses; the latter have improved a great deal. A few years ago the only horses in the country were bronchos and Indian "shaganappies," as they are called; now there are a lot of fine well-bred Ontario teams, which have been brought up by settlers and dealers, and the number of good entire horses increases every year. There was a wonderful display of roots at this year's show, and the best of the exhibits

were put aside by Mr. McKay, the manager of the Indian Head Experimental Farm, and preserved for exhibition at the Chicago World's Fair in the following year. Substantial money prizes are given at these shows, and they are excellent things for encouraging the farmers to give care and attention to their stock and crops.

Before the frost set in, fireguards had to be ploughed, and then the Municipal Council gave a grant to be expended on the trail near our place. Threshing was the next thing, and, although we tried to get in another machine, we had to put up with the old one, though we expected to be constantly having rows with the men: at the first place in the settlement things went very smoothly, but at the next place, one of the machine owners having struck another man's horse, there was a row and work was stopped for some time. We got on very slowly with the threshing, the machine breaking down nearly every day, which necessitated sending to the Fort or the station for repairs; the grain was turning out rather badly, and the men didn't seem to care how they threshed it. One day, through some strange coincidence, we all ran short of tobacco, not one man in the whole band having a bit; we were in the thick of the work and could not leave off to fetch it, so had to do as the Indians do, smoke "knick-knick," which is bark peeled off willow bushes; it is not at all bad mixed with tobacco, but when smoked alone has rather a strong flavour; however, we were very glad of it in the absence of anything better. My oats threshed out fairly well, yielding over six hundred bushels, and the wheat turned out two hundred bushels, but the frozen was so mixed up with the good that it would be impossible to separate it.

CHAPTER XII.

Ranching—The Stock—Cutting Firewood—"Broncho-busting"—The Colts—Wolves—Blizzards—Riding Bronchos—Mexican Saddles—Cowboys—A Winter Ride—Sixty Degrees below Zero—Hauling Hay—A Wolf Hunt—Cow Lost.

There was no more work to be done on the farm now, and the price of wheat and oats not being good enough to sell at present, I was offered a job on a ranche owned by an Englishman, about four miles away; I had done a good deal of riding and thought myself able to do the work, so I accepted it. It was not a very large ranche; there was a nice herd of cattle, and a good-sized band of ponies, the young ones of which were to be broken in that winter; there were two other boys, the owner's two sons and the owner himself, so that we had a good handful of men. The present saddle horses were rather poor ones, but we hoped during the winter to break in a few of the best colts ready for next summer's work.

The snow was already on the ground and we had a spell of very cold weather; the cows and calves were kept in the stable at night, but the young cattle and steers ran out among the bushes, where we fed them with hay. The band of ponies ran out on the prairie all the winter, scraping away the snow with their feet and eating the grass underneath; they never went far away, and sometimes would even come up to the buildings for a bit of hay, so that we could always get them when they were wanted. Firewood

was running short, so we set to work at once to cut a lot; we had to go nearly two miles for it to a good-sized bluff where there was a good supply of logs, rails, and dry firewood; the snow was just the right depth for sleighing, and we soon made a good hard trail, which we managed to keep clear all the winter. Having got a good pile of firewood, we set about getting some logs to build a new stable or repair the old ones, and managed to obtain some very fair trees, which we hauled home and stacked in the yard.

By Christmas we had got in as much wood as we required, and the snow being a good depth, we got in a few of the colts and started "broncho-busting." The first we took on was a big three-year-old, and, after tying his legs to put the harness on, we led him out with one of the older horses and attempted to hitch him to the sleigh, but he didn't like the look of it, and began lashing out at everything within reach; after a while he tired of this, and we once more led him up to the sleigh, and this time, with great difficulty, we got him hitched. I caught hold of the lines, jumped on to the sleigh, with orders to let him go as far as he liked, and just as one of the other fellows jumped on beside me, he started off with a jump, and, pulling the other horse with him, tore along through the snow at full gallop. I tried to check the pace a little, for I was afraid he might put his foot in a hole, but his mouth did not feel the bit in the least, so we had to sit back and let him go. There was a very cold wind blowing, so that our faces and hands froze frequently, and we had each to take hold of the lines in turn. After going a couple of miles at a good pace the colt began to show signs of distress, and very soon after, having just plunged through a deep snowdrift, he stopped dead, completely done up; this was just what we wanted,

so, without losing any time, we turned round and started them off for home; we had no more trouble, for he went back as quiet as any horse, and we had hard work to get him to move faster than a walk. The other horse was not a bit knocked up by the run, for he was used to it, and had helped to break in dozens of colts in this manner. We were mistaken in thinking the morning's run had been enough for the colt, for, until his mouth got right several weeks after, we had the same performance every morning, the distance getting shorter each time.

The next to be broken in was a three-year-old filly, very unlike the other, for as soon as we had got the harness on she stood shaking with nervousness; we got her hitched to the sleigh with little difficulty, but could not get her to move until the other horse started off and pulled her and the sleigh together. This sort of thing continued for a week, but we would rather have had the colt's gallops for a month than another week of her nervousness; however, in time she began to get more confidence, and by the end of the winter was one of our best working horses. Another colt we broke in was very little trouble, its great fault being idleness, and very often whilst in the sleigh it would stop dead and lie down, until a whip woke it up from its repose.

Since Christmas we had seen a great many wolves about, and several farmers in the neighbourhood had lost sheep and ponies, so we got some traps and set them near the carcass of an old horse, going down every morning to look after them; the second day after setting them we found a small fox, and the next day a wolf, and by constant trapping and shooting we managed to get a good many, though the number still at large was very great, and necessitated the

farmers keeping a good look-out. About this time we had some very hard weather, with heavy snowstorms and blizzards, and many accounts of casualties reached us. To be lost in a blizzard means certain death unless one can find shelter, and many people may be seen in the towns and villages, minus feet or hands, the result of being badly frozen in a blizzard.

The colts which had been broken in to the sleigh had not yet been ridden, and the next job was, therefore, to get them used to the saddle, to be ready for next summer, when we should have need of them. We had good Mexican saddles, which are used by all cowboys on account of their many advantages; the high pommel in front is used to wind the lasso round after it has been thrown; the horse is then gradually brought round, and the lassoed animal soon pulled up. From laces round the saddle hang the lasso and things required to be carried on a long ride; the weight of the whole saddle and appurtenances is rather large, but is distributed well over the body of the animal by means of the wide skirts. The first colt to be ridden was the big runaway, and whilst the others were hunting up the rest of the band, I had an hour's fun with him. As soon as I sprang into the saddle he stuck out his head, evidently wondering what had happened. I didn't quite understand what to do next, but the boss told me to give him some spur, which I accordingly did, and for the next five minutes had my hands full; he tried all manner of dodges to get rid of his burden, bucking, rearing, and at last lay down to roll, when I quickly scrambled out of the way. He got up again, and after a little more bucking he started off at his well-known pace across the snow, but, as I expected, he didn't go far, for on coming to the first deep

drift, he floundered and went head first into it, whilst I dropped over his head into a nice soft bed of snow; this completely bewildered him, and on getting up again I had very little trouble with him, and eventually rode after the other boys to help drive in the band. I was glad to find that my day's breaking was over, and that I had got off so easily, for I had fully expected to be nearly killed; therefore, it was with satisfaction that I stood by and watched one of the other boys tackle the filly; we had thought she would be trouble, but were very much mistaken, for he had a weapon better than I had had. We had a few more colts to ride, which all gave more or less trouble except the lazy one, which was very easily broken, evidently not thinking it worth the trouble to make a disturbance.

About this time there was to be an amateur minstrel entertainment at the Fort, and three of us got leave to go; the thermometer stood at forty degrees below zero when we left at five o'clock in the evening, and a north-west wind nearly cut us through, but we had a team of good colts in the sleigh and went down in good time. We were obliged to get back that night, although everyone thought we ran a risk of getting frozen, for it was sixty degrees below zero when we started from the Fort; we went at a good pace for some miles, but the horses seemed to get overpowered by the cold, and could not be made to go above a walk; our noses, ears and fingers were continually freezing, whilst we had each to get out and walk in turn, to keep the circulation in our feet. At one time we got off the trail and were hunting about for half an hour before we could regain it, and then the horses were so done up and shivering with the cold that we could hardly get them to move, till someone thought of a dodge, and getting out his revolver.

fired it in the air, at which the horses started off at a good pace. We reached home at two o'clock in the morning, the horses done up and ourselves nearly frozen to death, determined never to make another night journey to the Fort in winter.

There was a good bit of hay stacked about four miles away which had to be hauled in, and as that round the buildings was running short, we fixed the hay-rack on the sleighs and set to work to get it in. I did most of it with my team, as they were strong and could bring in a good load; two of us generally went, and we found it very pleasant work on fine days, for we always took our guns, and sometimes managed to get a wolf and some rabbits.

The prairie-chickens were very plentiful this winter, settling in the yard to pick up the seeds, and we kept ourselves well supplied with these and some very large rabbits, sometimes called Belgian hares.

One warm day, when I was riding one of the colts for exercise, I saw a pack of nearly a dozen wolves prowling round the buildings; I went in for the rifle, and on coming back found them all going away, so I jumped on the colt and followed them. They kept a good distance in front for several miles, but at last, in going round some bluffs, I got within reasonable distance and fired. I had forgotten that the colt had not been used to fire, and had laid the reins over the pommel and took steady aim with both hands; whether I hit anything I never knew, for the colt gave a jump, and I had just time to hang on to his mane to prevent going over; he tore along for some distance, but I regained the reins and let him go in the direction of home, where one of the other fellows had just shot a wolf.

Soon after this we had a lot more snow, and the trail to the haystacks was anything but good: the first time we went after the storm we got stuck fast in a large drift, and on getting clear again, the sleigh ran over a hidden stump and upset, pitching us and the hay into the snow: after losing a lot of our hay we got home, but we had a good many such accidents before we again got the trail in good condition.

The young colts, with being continually worked and ridden, were all getting trustworthy: the cattle, especially those in the stables, were in good condition, and the cows were beginning to calve. We went in for a little butchering when we had time, and killed several steers and a lot of pigs, which we sold without any difficulty at the Fort. One day we all had a big hunt after a cow that we supposed had calved somewhere on the prairie: it was a bitterly cold day, and we were afraid the calf might get frozen, so we had to get about smart: we had been out all day, searching through all the bluffs, and were coming home together, having met at a certain point, when we saw a white object among the bushes, which turned out to be a white calf, almost frozen to death, whilst the mother was not far away. I rode on and came back with a sleigh, in which we carried back the calf, and soon had it in a warm place.

CHAPTER XIII.

*The Shack—Batching—Bannock and Slap-jack—Cold Weather—Long Days—
Qu'appelle Station—An Arrival from England—Leaving the Farm—On the
P. che—Branding—Catching Horses—A Corral.*

By the end of March the snow rapidly began to thaw, and, as I wished to put in some crop on my own place, I began to get the shack fixed up to make it habitable. I had not yet lived much in the house, and the roof and walls were sadly in need of repairs; the former had had most of the mud washed off, whilst the walls had scarcely any plaster left in between the logs; so I set to work and mixed a lot of mud, and with it covered up the roof and filled the holes in the walls. At last I got the place in order, and having fixed up a stove and made a bed out of some rough rails, I established myself in the house to wait till the ground was ready to sow. My furniture consisted of a stove, bed, table, and two chairs, mostly home made, whilst for cooking utensils I had a kettle, frying pan, saucepan, and two or three tin plates and cups; it was not a very grand display, but, having only myself to please, and not expecting many visitors, I concluded that the less I had the less work it would give me.

I had done a good deal of cooking in camp at Indian Head, and knew how to prepare a decent meal, though I did not at all like coming in after a hard day's work and

find the fire out and supper to be prepared. It is a frequent thing for men in this position to go without food rather than be obliged to cook it, and indeed, after a particularly hard day, I have taken a piece of cold bannock and gone to bed rather than light a fire and prepare a bit of bacon. Bannock is generally made by bachelors not able or not caring to make bread; it is simply flour and water with a little soda, and after being kneaded a little, is rolled out flat and put in the oven, making a plain cake, and although the inside sometimes turns out raw, it is reckoned by bachelors to be a very good substitute for bread. Another favourite dish, which I frequently indulged in, is also made of flour and water, mixed into a batter and fried in fat; it is eaten with syrup or sugar, and is called "slap-jack." I also had a piece of very salt bacon and a few potatoes, and with these, and occasionally some butter and eggs, I made as much variety as possible.

The first night in the place was very cold, for the winter had not yet passed, and in the morning I found a piece of plaster had fallen out of the wall just above my head, letting in more fresh air than was necessary. For the next few days the weather was very severe, and I frequently had to leave the house and go into the snug little stable, where the horses were, to keep myself warm. All this time I seldom saw a soul, and, having very little to read, found it very lonely. Once a week at least I saw someone, and that was at the post office, where everyone went for the mails on Friday evening.

At last, after waiting a fortnight, the last of the snow went; but even then we were not able to commence seeding, and it was not for several days that the ground was fit to plough. I did not intend to put in much grain, as I had

had good offers to go back on to the ranche I had worked on for the last six months, so I selected the best of my fields and began to sow wheat on the stubble and plough it under. I had some long days' work then, getting up at five, feeding, grooming and harnessing the horses, getting breakfast ready, sowing a piece of land and getting out to plough as soon as possible; at dinner-time there was a meal to be got ready, after which I resumed ploughing till seven; then there were the horses to feed, wood to cut, a fire to light and supper to be prepared, after which meal there was always some washing up and other small jobs which kept me busy till ten o'clock. Washing up seems to be the worst job a bachelor has, and things are always used as often as possible, and then piled up until everything is dirty, when a big washing takes place. In these long hard days Sunday came as a delightful rest, and on these opportunities I generally made a supply of bannock and other things to last the whole of the week: one Sunday the boys from the ranche came over, bringing a few eggs, with which we made some special "slap-jacks," fully equal to English pancakes.

Some three hundred yards from my place was a large flat slough, which, owing to the large quantity of snow, was now covered with water to the depth of two feet, and on it were some hundreds of ducks and geese. I was in need of a little variety of food, so one evening, having left off work earlier than usual, I walked over that way with the gun; in order to get within range of the ducks I had to creep for some distance through the grass to get behind a small bush, from whence I got a good shot, and, on the smoke clearing away, saw a dozen struggling in the water. I had to wade through the cold water after most of these,

but was fully repaid by a dinner of roast duck. Having sown half the twelve-acre field with wheat, I began to put oats on the remainder, and soon had it all finished.

I had had a letter from a friend in England who was coming out, advising me on what ship he had sailed. I was expecting a telegram from him to announce his arrival, and having gone down to the Fort to catch some fish, I found one there waiting for me. He had left Quebec at a certain time, and I could judge pretty well how long he would be getting from there to Qu'appelle Station, where I was to meet him. One of the fellows from the ranche wanted to go down, so we started off one morning with the wagon, taking a tent with us, not knowing how long we might have to wait for the train. It was beautiful weather, and the mosquitoes had not yet appeared: we camped for dinner on the other side of the Fort, and found the sun so hot that the skin began to peel off our faces. We arrived at the station in good time, and got our horses into a stable and the tent fixed and made comfortable, after which we made a good supper off tea and a kind of pemmican, somewhat resembling corned beef.

Qu'appelle Station, formerly called Troy, is much larger than Fort Qu'appelle, and is pleasantly situated among the bluffs: two miles from the town are the Agricultural College, schools, and the residence of the Episcopal Bishop of Qu'appelle, who arrived from England on the same train as my friend. On enquiry at the station-house we found that the train from the east was twenty-three hours late, so we went back to the tent and settled ourselves comfortably for the night, and managed to sleep until late next morning, when, having nothing better to do, we amused

ourselves by playing quoits with old horse-shoes, a very popular game in the North West. At night we waited for the train, and on its arrival found that the emigrants' train had been delayed and would not be in for another thirty-six hours; the few cars just arrived were only sent on with the mails and regular passengers. The night got very dark, and from the general appearance of the sky we judged we were in for a heavy thunderstorm, and made our tent secure before we turned in; we had not been asleep long before we were roused by a terrible peal of thunder, and the rain began to pour down in torrents, whilst our little tent was in constant danger of being carried away by the wind. The canvas kept out the rain very well, but in a few minutes a stream of water began to flow underneath, wetting all our blankets and clothes; it kept on like this till daylight, when the rain suddenly ceased, and in a short time the sun came out and scarcely any trace of the storm was to be seen. That day we had to amuse ourselves as best we could until night, when we had another thunderstorm, and having got completely washed out of our tent, had to go and spend the night in the stable with the horses.

Next morning was fine, and about eight o'clock the train came in, and we soon found our new chum, R—, and started off for the Fort, which place we reached by noon, and got home in good time to light a fire and get some supper, a novelty which R— enjoyed for a short time, but, like the rest of us, he soon became tired of it. I found it much better having another fellow with me, and we got on fairly comfortable except at nights, when, the bed not being sufficiently large for two, we had to take turns to sleep on the floor.

The only work we had just then was to fence in a piece

of ground, so that we had plenty of time to prepare a decent meal, our principal dish being "slap-jack." I wanted to get work for it— somewhere in the neighbourhood, so that I could go back to the ranche for a few months, and soon came across a man who was willing to keep him for his work until he had learnt his way about, so we got our baggage together and bid good-bye to the old shack, he going to his work and I to the ranche.

As I now intended to leave the farm altogether, I had sold the piece of crop on my ground, and on looking about for a customer for the team and colts, I was lucky enough to sell them to the owner of the ranche, in whose hands I knew they would be well cared for and have a good home, for they had proved themselves a good team, and I had naturally become attached to them. I was not at all sorry to get back to the ranche after the lonely life on the farm, and having ploughed in several acres of potatoes we got the colts in, and with a little more working, had them ready for sale, whenever a customer should chance to come round. The next work was to brand the young calves, and this we proceeded to do by running them into a yard, and bringing them out one by one to be roped and thrown, when the hot iron was applied to the shoulder, leaving a mark by which they can be easily recognised, no matter how far they may stray away on the prairie, for every rancher has a registered brand.

Some of the stables had, during the winter, been rather cold for want of good roofs, so we set to work to remedy this by pitching off the old straw and ploughing up some good stiff sods of turf, which we laid double thickness on the rafters, covering up all the cracks with loose soil. These

are the best roofs to be obtained in this country for stables, and are becoming universal: the one drawback is the weight, which necessitates extra props being placed under the beams; no rain can get through a properly made roof, and in winter they keep the stables very comfortable. Sods are rapidly becoming popular for building stables and even houses. We went to a bee one day to help put up a sod stable fifty feet long, twenty feet wide, and with walls three feet thick; there were a dozen men there, some ploughing the sods, others hauling them to the place in wagons, while the rest built up the walls; it took two days' hard work to complete, but when finished it made a splendid stable, calculated to last many years.

The weather being very fine and the grass fresh, we let most of the young calves out on the prairie to run with the herd, but very soon found we had done wrong, for nearly every day they were missing, and caused a great deal of extra work; many of the calves ran with the mothers, but we were milking six cows, so that these six calves had to be reared by hand, and proved to be more trouble than the rest of the ranche put together. We had one fenced grass field, but it was small and in poor condition, only feeding the working horses and a few sheep, or we should have kept both the calves and the milking cows there; but, as it was, the latter went off with the rest of the herd in the morning, necessitating one man to go with them to herd them and bring them in at night. On getting up in the morning we generally had an hour's work catching the horses which we were to ride or work that day; they were in the field, but when they saw us coming with bridles and lassoes they began to tear round, trying to get through the fence; we sometimes managed to catch one or two with a handful of

ables, but the rest were too old to be caught by that trick, so we had to mount the ones we had captured till we could run them down and lasso them. The cattle were always kept in a large corral at night; the corral is built of strong posts and rails to a good height, and is generally constructed at the corner of a fence, so that the cattle may be easily driven into it, whilst in the centre is the indispensable smudge to keep away the mosquitoes.



CHAPTER XIV.

Digging a Well—Nearly an Accident—A New Railway—Railway Companies—
A Large Rancho—The Round up—Calves Missing—Start for England—
Regrets—The Journey—Winnipeg—Fort William—S.S. "Athabasca"—Lake
Superior—Sault St. Marie—The Locks—Lake Huron—Georgian Bay—Owen
Sound.

During the winter we had been very short of water, some of the cattle often having to go without, so we had to set to work at once to dig a well; having selected a suitable spot, we commenced, but soon found that the frost had not yet gone out of the ground; however, we were in need of water, so kept on, and at the depth of twelve feet came to a good spring, completing the well by lining it with lumber and logs.

We had a little more work in breaking some of the colts, and one day nearly had a bad accident; a young filly which was always a nuisance to catch had been lassoed and left tied up to the corral; she had often shown signs of viciousness, but we had lately thought her cured of it, so one of the fellows went up to put a bridle on her, and had just loosed the lasso, when she reared up and struck out at him with her fore feet, just missing his head, but hitting him on the shoulder and bringing him to the ground; we at once rushed up, but had to take care of ourselves, for the filly was fairly wild and began tearing round the corral till a lasso brought her to a stop, when she charged straight at us, rearing and striking out; we all had our lassoes ready, and one being thrown round her neck and another round

her fore legs, we soon had the satisfaction of seeing her thrown. The mosquitoes now seemed to be worse than they had ever been before, for not only did they trouble us at night, but we had them all through the day; we sometimes used nets for riding, but they are very hot and uncomfortable, and are perhaps the worst of two evils.

There had lately been a great deal of talk about building a railway to Fort Qu'appelle from some point on the Canadian Pacific; meetings had been held and it was generally believed that the road would be in by November, but summer came and no start was made, and then it transpired that the company had applied to the Government for further aid and extension of time for building. Before starting a railway in these parts of Canada, a grant of land is asked of the Government; if this is granted bonuses are then asked of the various towns and villages through which the line is to pass; these moneys and the vast tracts of land granted go a long way towards floating the concern. But, indeed, it is needed, for building a new railway in some of the outlying parts is not always a sure speculation, and, as it is for the benefit of the settlers, it is only right that the Government should assist. At present the railway has not reached Fort Qu'appelle, but negotiations are being carried on with the Government, and all concerned have hopes that it may be soon commenced, to open up one of the finest pieces of country in Canada.

One Sunday in May we drove fifteen miles north to a ranche owned by an Englishman: it was a much larger place than ours, and was nicely situated on the edge of a small lake, which supplied the stock with water all through the year. There was a fine band of ponies and heavy Canadian horses, and several good herds of cattle. Most of the

cowboys were away on the round-up, after some of the stray cattle and horses. In some of the principal ranching districts the men muster from every place in the neighbourhood, and start off in different directions, scouring the country and bringing in all the cattle they find; as they are all branded except the young calves, each man picks out his own, and having applied the hot iron to those not already branded, turns them up again for the summer. Ours being only a small ranche we never went in for these round-ups, keeping the cattle near home all through the year. A cowboy's dress is principally composed of leather, this being the most serviceable material for riding; a great feature of the costume is the leather fringe which adorns the sleeves and shoulders of the shirt and the legs of the pants, and without which none is complete.

The rough work of the ranche had now become familiar to me, and I had hopes of staying on for some time, when I was again compelled to return to England. I had still a fortnight to stay, when one day eight or nine calves which had gone out with the herd were missed, having evidently been driven away by the mosquitoes; being only a few months old, we were naturally anxious about them, so next morning I set out on one of the colts to scour the country, and by winding in and out, round bluffs and through every place where they might conceal themselves, I covered eighty miles before night. Next morning I got a fresh horse and started out with provisions, going further than before, but still winding about, and camped for the night under a tree, tethering the horse out to feed. For several days I kept on like this, camping out at night, and getting a meal whenever I came across a house. At last I started back home, but had not gone very far when I passed a shallow slough

of water with high grass and reeds, from which proceeded a noise very much resembling a hungry calf's bawl; I rode in and there found the objects of my search, nearly covered with grass and mud; when they saw me they soon pulled themselves out of the mud, and before long I had them at home, looking very dirty and hungry.

I had sold all my belongings except the farm, for which I did not expect to find a customer until the railway came in, and I now began to get my things in readiness to start for England. The skins I had shot and trapped had been dressed by an old squaw who lived near, a most miserable-looking object, whose saving virtue, perhaps, was her cleverness in dressing skins.

It was with many regrets that I turned my back on the place I had begun to regard as home, and to leave the work to which I had become attached, to return to a country the ways of which I had almost forgotten, and to give up a life of freedom such as can only be enjoyed in a country like Canada. Some of the fellows drove me to the Fort, where, after seeing a few old chums, I took the stage for Qu'apelle Station, which place was reached late in the afternoon. I stayed at the Leland Hotel during the night, and next morning boarded the train, which left at eleven o'clock, taking a ticket for Winnipeg, where I intended to book my passage to England.

We soon came to Indian Head. The ground we had ploughed the previous year on the Sunbeam Farm was in crop and looked in splendid condition, as did the wheat on the Bell, Brassey and other farms in the neighbourhood. At Broadview we stayed half an hour for dinner, and arrived at Brandon about three, reaching Portage la Prairie

two hours later; round here the crops looked excellent, and promised a good season. It was nine o'clock at night when we reached Winnipeg, and going across to the Clifton House, I had a good rest, and next day went to the station to get a ticket to England. The next boat to suit me was the Cunarder "Umbria," on which I accordingly booked; I still had a fortnight to spare, and as a trip across the lakes and through Ontario could be taken for the same amount as the old route, *viâ* Montreal, I decided on going that way.

The boat in which I was to cross the lake was not due to start from Fort William for two days, so, until then, I decided to stay in Winnipeg. I fell in with another fellow from the west, and as it was very hot weather, we passed most of our time sailing on the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, which join just here. In the evening there were some trotting races on a track outside the city, and here we saw some of the best trotting horses in Canada. The next day a train of emigrants came in, mostly English people, and, remembering that we were once in the same position, we were able to give some of them a little advice as to obtaining work.

That night I started for Port Arthur, where I arrived the following evening, and stayed the night at the Canadian Pacific Hotel. The following day I went by electric tram to Port Arthur, four miles distant, and there went for a row on Lake Superior, going out as far as the breakwater, beyond which the water was rough. On returning to Fort William I found the Canadian Pacific Railway Co.'s s.s. "Athabasca" in the river ready to start, so going on board, we were soon allotted our cabins, which were fitted up in splendid style, with accommodation for only one person

in each; the saloon was sumptuously furnished, whilst the dining saloon at the other end of the vessel, looked especially tempting.

By four o'clock we were under weigh and steaming down the Kaministiquia River; coming out on to the lake, we crossed the bay on which Port Arthur is situated, and in an hour's time came abreast of Thunder Cape, a rocky promontory 1,370 feet high. At six o'clock the bell sounded for dinner, after which the water got rather choppy, and as a thick fog came on, the vessel was obliged to go slowly, the fog-horn blowing continually. We found our berths very comfortable, and as the ship was fairly steady, we got a good night's rest.

The next morning the fog was still very thick, and as there was a bit of a sea on, a good many people did not get up for breakfast, which, like the dinner, was served up in first-class style. We passed a great many vessels, both sailing and steamers, and also some whalebacks, which look very curious; they are built of iron and rounded over the top, rather resembling a large torpedo; the engines are in the stern, where there is also a flat deck for navigating the vessel; like most ships on the lake, they are used principally for carrying grain and flour. About mid-day the fog cleared off, and soon after we passed an immense raft of logs, towed by tugs; they were kept together by the outside logs being fastened together with chains, and were evidently being taken from some of the lumbering districts on the north shore to one of the markets in the States.

Lunch was served at twelve o'clock, after which, the weather now being fine and warm, we sat out on the upper

deck watching the various craft go by. We noticed that steamers coming towards us appeared to be a tremendous size, but on passing we found they were really smaller than ourselves; this is accounted for by the high bows which these lake steamers have, evidently built to withstand the heavy seas which are so common on Lake Superior and Lake Huron. We were lucky in having very fine weather, but it was hard to believe that we were on a fresh-water lake, and not on the open sea. Lake Superior never entirely freezes over, but all through the summer the water is icy cold, and any unfortunate sailor who falls overboard or is wrecked has no chance of swimming, but goes to the bottom immediately.

Lakes Superior and Huron are joined by the Sault St. Marie River, which at its western end falls some twenty feet by rapids; a canal has been built round these on the American side, and large locks, said to be the finest in the world, enable ships to pass into the smooth water beyond the rapids. Towards four o'clock we came in sight of land, and soon after were in the river and entering the canal; it was crowded with shipping, and we heard that we could not get through the locks that night, so several of us went on shore at the town of Sault St. Marie, in the State of Michigan. It was Sunday afternoon, but all the shops were open and business going on as usual, whilst a small theatre was in full swing. There is a large Fort situated near here, and some of the garrison were parading the streets with umbrellas to keep off the heat of the sun. The streets were well built, and the people were evidently proud of their country, for on nearly every house waved the Stars and Stripes: fruit was very cheap, and after laying in a stock, we walked down to the locks to watch the shipping pass

through. On the opposite side of the river is the little Canadian town of Sault St. Marie, a quiet and picturesque place, very different from the rowdy town on the American side.

It was not until ten o'clock that night that the "Athabasca" got through the locks, and, the night being very dark, we anchored in the river till daylight; our sister ship, the "Alberta," was there waiting to get through the locks, bound for Fort William. On getting up next morning we were already on our course down the river; heavy bush lined the banks on both sides, broken now and again by a little fishing village. The river is half a mile wide here and very deep, for in some places the vessel went quite close to the Canadian side. About nine o'clock we emerged into Lake Huron; the sun was very hot, but on deck the air was pleasant, and the lake looked splendid, dotted with numerous small islets, which we soon left behind, and in a short time came in sight of the Great Manitoulin Island, stretching along the north shore of the lake.

We were now steaming at a good speed, and before dark came into the Georgian Bay, noted alike for its fish and its heavy storms. We passed a great number of small islands, on one of which the Canadian Pacific steamer "Manitoba" was wrecked only a few weeks before; happily very little damage was done, and she was towed into dock, where she was speedily put right. We were due at Owen Sound, our destination, during the night, so after enjoying a cool evening on deck, we went below for our last sleep on board, sorry to have so soon ended such a pleasant trip. On getting up early next morning we found ourselves alongside the dock, where a train was waiting to convey passengers to Toronto.

CHAPTER XV.

A Fog—Manitoulin Island—Timber—Toronto—Island Park—Niagara Falls—
"Maid of the Mist"—Reminiscences—New York Central—"Exposition
Flyer"—Catskill Mountains—Hudson River—New York—S.S. "Umbria"—
Man Overboard—Queenstown—England.

I was not going on at present, as I wanted to pay a short visit to my friend P— on the Manitoulin Island, and as there was no boat until late at night, I went to a hotel to wait until then.

Owen Sound is a very pretty place, situated at the south-east corner of Lake Huron; the streets are well laid out with rows of maple trees, a great contrast to the bare looking places on the prairie. I was told of a waterfall some three miles away, so after breakfast I set out to walk there, passing on the way some really good farms. Inglis Falls I found to be fully worthy of the admiration ascribed to them, and after enjoying the scene for some time, I returned to Owen Sound, and after dinner went for a row in the harbour and among the ships, which were principally engaged in unloading wheat at the elevators.

At nine o'clock that night I went on board the North Shore Navigation Co.'s steamer "City of Midland," bound for Manitowaning; she was a small vessel, but well fitted up and comfortable, and although the berths were not like those on the "Athabasca," we managed to sleep well, and on getting up next morning found a dense fog, so thick that it was impossible to see more than twenty yards in

front. We soon found that the captain was thoroughly lost, and before long stopped the boat. Having waited for some time we started off again at a slow pace, but had not proceeded far before we saw a small island just in front; the engines were immediately reversed and the progress stopped, but not before we had felt a slight bump. After this we lay by for an hour until the fog cleared off, when we once more proceeded on our way and soon came in sight of the north shore. An hour's run brought us to our first stopping place, Killarney, a small fishing village situated on a narrow sound; as we steamed up, the land on each side was not more than ten yards away, and the boat drew up at a wharf built on the shore, whilst the water could be seen clear under the ship's bottom six feet or more. This district of Algoma, along the north shore, is very rocky and unfit for cultivation, the only work being fishing, lumbering and mining.

Leaving Killarney, we were not long in crossing to the Manitoulin Island, and entering a bay soon came to the little town of Manitowaning. It is only a very small place, not even as large as many towns out west, but its situation on the lake is favourable for commerce. I enquired for my friend's place, and having been directed, set out. There were several good farms about, but the country seemed very stony, and in some places was nothing but solid rock. P—'s farm was two miles from the town, and was not so rough and stony as some I had passed on the way; still, the heavy yellow mud did not compare favourably with the beautiful black loam in Manitoba and the North West. The houses were mostly frame, and the farmers altogether seemed very prosperous; the crops did not look at all well, for rain was needed badly, but the hay, which has to be

cultivated in these parts, was doing well, and was already three feet high.

The following day we went into the bush to get some cedar logs, and succeeded in obtaining a few beautiful pieces of timber, over forty feet long and perfectly straight, that would have been worth a small fortune in the North West. We saw tracks of bears about the bush, but although we walked about for hours, and came across several strange birds and animals, common only to these parts, we failed to find a bear. One day we went fishing on the lake and caught dozens of perch and other fish. The Indians, who are of the Mic-Mac tribe, and are quite civilised, go in for fishing, and make a good living by it.

At first I was not particularly struck with the country, but when I came to see more of it, and recognised its advantages in the way of timber and means of transit, I began to overlook in some way its drawbacks, and, although it can never be compared to the west, I have no doubt it would make a good country for English farmers who do not care to go through the hardships pertaining to life on the prairie.

I stayed three days with P—, and left him on the third evening; there had been a pic-nic from Killarney, and the boat, the "City of Midland," was crowded with people as far as that place, after which we had room to move about and find a comfortable berth. Early next morning we arrived at Owen Sound, and it being Sunday, and no train for Toronto until the morning, I spent the day walking along the shore and among the bush in the neighbourhood. This Sun lay was a great contrast to the last, spent at Sault St. Marie, for now we were in Canada, where the people, as far as possible, make it a day of rest.

The train started for Toronto early in the morning, and we came near to missing it. The line ran through a fairly good country, passing several towns, and in less than four hours' time we reached the outskirts of Toronto, and presently drew up at the station, on the shore of Lake Ontario. After making my headquarters, I walked round part of the city, and could not help admiring the fine buildings and shops in the principal streets. In the afternoon I crossed on the ferry to the Island, about a mile distant from the mainland, which is the pleasure ground of Toronto, and where there are plenty of boats, bathing machines, and all kinds of amusements; at night the Island was lit up by fairy lamps, and a military band and other things attracted a great crowd; this is kept up all through the summer, and the people of Toronto would be at a loss without the Island Park.

At seven o'clock next morning I left Toronto for Niagara Falls by the Grand Trunk Railway, and after running along the lake shore for some distance, came to Hamilton, one of the largest towns in Ontario, and a great farming centre. From here to the Falls we passed through a beautiful country, with fields of grapes, peaches, and all kinds of fruit in splendid condition; in this part fruit is grown to a large extent, and, being nearer to the Eastern and European markets, this branch of farming is carried on as successfully as in California and Oregon.

About ten o'clock we arrived at Niagara Falls on the Canada side, and leaving there came out upon the Suspension Bridge, under which, at a tremendous depth, the Rapids rushed between the narrow rocky banks. On the other side the train stopped at Suspension Bridge Station,

and here we alighted. Recrossing the bridge, I walked alongside the river in the new Queen Victoria Park till I came to the New Suspension Bridge near the Falls, which I crossed, and descended in the elevator, at the foot of which the two little steamers, both called "Maid of the Mist," start on their trips through the spray. Going on board one of these tiny vessels, we were given a suit of oilskins, and, having put these on, took our seats in the bow of the boat, which started off at full speed against the strong current. In a few minutes we began to feel the benefit of our oilskins, for we were drawing near to the American Fall, the spray from which nearly drowned us, whilst the boat began to toss and pitch on the troubled waters. We were not sorry to get clear of the spray, for we could scarcely breathe, so dense was the downpour; and now the little boat had to strain its efforts to make headway against the current, but little by little we drew near to the Canadian, or Horse Shoe Fall, which is by far the larger of the two; the water was very rough here, and our little craft buried her bows into the waves as they came rushing down from the Fall. Gradually we got into the spray, where we beheld a magnificent rainbow, until the dense mass of water compelled us to beat a retreat into the covered saloon.

We were not long going back with the current, and having landed on the Canadian side, went to the Table Rock House, where we were once more dressed in oilskins and taken down by an elevator to a passage cut in the rock under the Fall, and then left to wander at the foot and admire the mass of green water come rolling over, burying itself in the cloud of spray. No words can describe this beautiful scene, and were there not other things to be seen, one might stay here and admire it all day; it was down here that I

met an English clergyman, who told me that, after seeing most of the sights of the Old World, he had at last ventured across to visit the Falls, and now he was here, he found it difficult to tear himself away from such a scene of grandeur and magnificence.

Crossing over to the American side again, I then went across the bridge to Goat Island, and down by another elevator to the Cave of the Winds, a passage on the rocks under part of the American Fall; the noise and spray is dreadful, and the place is considered dangerous, owing to the pieces of rock which occasionally fall. Splendid views are obtained from Goat Island and Luna Island, and after admiring these for some time, I went down the river to the Rapids and Whirlpool, as far as the terrible place where Captain Webb lost his life.

After a walk round the American town, which is chiefly composed of restaurants and curio shops, I came back to spend the evening in the Park, overlooking the rapids above the Fall, where I made the acquaintance of an old gentleman, a resident, who, in the course of conversation, told me of some of the many stirring incidents he had witnessed; how a man named Avery had been carried down the river in a boat, and had clung to a small rock just visible among the swirling waters; how the people lined the banks and endeavoured to help him, but after twelve hours of fruitless attempts they saw him loose his hold and go over the Fall; how one of the old "Maid of the Mists," being heavily mortgaged, had run down the rapids without an accident, and out on to the lake beyond, to escape being seized; and how when Captain Webb started out on his last trip, the people had advised him to keep clear

of the worst part, but he took no notice of their warning words, and plunged into the midst of it, where the terrible waters broke every bone in his body. For hours I sat with this gentleman, listening to his stories, till at last, as the night got dark, I went to the hotel, where all through the night I was sensible of a muffled rumbling, caused by the great Waterfall

I was sorry to have to leave Niagara as early as six o'clock the following day, but the railways do not as a rule make time-tables to accommodate visitors, so at that early hour I was on my way to New York by the New York Central and Hudson River Railway, the great four-track road owned by Vanderbilt. Going by slow train to Rochester, where the line runs through the principal streets, we there got on board the celebrated "Exposition Flyer," the fastest train in the world, running between Chicago and New York. This wonderful train was advertised to travel at the rate of seventy miles an hour, and this it did without the least bit of jolting, running so smoothly that writing was quite easy. For some hours we followed the Mohawk Valley, one of the oldest and richest farming countries in America, passing the towns of Utica, Troy and Syracuse, till at last we reached the city of Albany, the capital of the State of New York, where are situated the magnificent State buildings; here we crossed the Hudson River, on which might be seen numbers of the curious-looking river steamers.

From Albany to New York the line runs continually along the Hudson River, on the banks of which are built numbers of ice-houses, which in winter are stored with ice for the New York markets; the scenery down the river

is very fine, especially further on, where the Catskill Mountains, the scene of Rip Van Winkle's slumbers, line the river on the opposite side. These mountains are a favourite place for New York tourists, and good hunting and fishing are to be obtained in the district. Along the opposite bank of the river runs the West Shore Railroad, built in opposition to the New York Central, but subsequently bought by Mr. Vanderbilt. As we were passing along by the Catskills, a heavy thunderstorm came on, and the flashes of lightning lit up the high peaks and made a grand scene.

After passing Poughkeepsie, Sing-Sing, where the State prison is situated, and other small towns, it began to get dark, and it was nine o'clock before we first saw the lights of New York, and after passing through Harlem and other suburbs, we at last pulled up at the Central Station, situated on Sixth Avenue and Forty-second Street. In New York the avenues run the length of the town, whilst the streets cross them at right angles, all being numbered. I went to a hotel opposite the Central Station, where, if things were dear, they were certainly good, and during the three days I was in the city, visited the Statue of Liberty, Brooklyn Bridge, the elevated railroad, and the principal places of interest.

On the Saturday morning I went down to the wharf, which lines the river for some distance, and going on board the Cunard s.s. "Umbria," in a short time we were steaming down the river, and past the huge Statue of Liberty, out on to the Atlantic. It was a beautiful day, and numbers of yachts were sailing on Long Island Sound, all with white canvas, making a pretty picture. I soon found out the superiority of the "Umbria" over other boats I had been on, for our saloons and staterooms were splendidly

fitted up, and the meals were well served and with much variety. The weather was all that could be desired, very few persons being affected by the slight rolling of the ship.

We had a very uneventful voyage until the fifth day out, when, whilst getting up in the morning, I heard a cry, "Man overboard!" and felt the engines stop. We all rushed on deck, and looking astern, we saw a man's head bobbing up and down, but being rapidly left behind; someone had thrown him a lifebuoy, but it was doubtful if he had seen it. Before the vessel could be stopped he was a mile astern, and we who had swarmed up the rigging could see him now and again rise on a wave. A boat had been lowered, and was about half way to him when we suddenly lost sight of him, but presently our hopes were again revived by seeing the lifebuoy with what appeared to be a man's head in it; the boat's crew saw it, and at once strained every effort, and made their little craft fly through the water, amid the cheers of those on board, which suddenly changed to a groan when one of the men picked up the empty lifebuoy, when we saw that what we took to be a man's head was only a shadow. After rowing about for some time the boat returned to the ship, and we were mustered for a roll call, to ascertain who was lost; it turned out to be a New York gentleman in the saloon, but how he came to get overboard was not found out.

On the Saturday morning we arrived at Queenstown, and, after getting good views of the coast of Wales, arrived in the mouth of the Mersey at ten o'clock that night. The tender was soon alongside, and leaving our floating palace, we were soon set on English soil, with naught but the memories of the past few years to remind us of our work and journeys on the great Western Continent.

CONCLUSION.

In conclusion, the following plain statements may be found useful to intending emigrants. Let us first take the case of a young man who goes out with, say, £200. By this time it is very well known in England that pupil-farming with large premiums, once so extensively carried on, is now almost a thing of the past, nearly every young man knowing that any respectable farmer will board him for his work until he becomes more proficient, when we will suppose he takes up a homestead, the fee for which will cost him

him	£2
a team of horse	...	£30 to £60	
wagons, ploughs, barrows	...	£30	
materials for house, &c.	...	£20	
mower, horse rake, &c.	...	£30	
seed grain & horse feed	...	£8	
with household expenses until the second year,			
when the first return comes in	...	£30	
Total			£150 to £180

In the first year, besides building house and stables, he may break and backset 20 acres; at the end of the second year he gets a return on this. Presuming that the grain

is not frozen, and putting aside three acres for seed and horse feed, we can sum up the extent of this return:—

17 acres of wheat at 30 bushels an acre (a moderate crop) yields 510 bushels, which, at 40 cents per bushel (a good price nowadays), is worth \$204, or £41.

Every year he may break more land, thus every year having larger crops; he may also go in for a cow or some mares, which pay for themselves in a short time.

From these figures a conclusion may be taken; a living may be made, but, beyond this, unless the seasons are extraordinarily fruitful, a young man, alone and unaided, with all the work of the farm and the house upon his hands, can expect little.

But a man with a family, especially if some are grown up, has many more advantages; he can devote his whole time to the farm; he can keep a number of cows, the butter from which will supply him with provisions from the stores; he or some of his family may go out to work during the summer, or he may put up a lot of hay, which is readily sold in winter. Thus may be seen the advantages he has over the poor bachelor.

Let us now take the case of a poor man, who emigrates with his family and next to nothing in the way of capital. He may go out to work and keep his family until returns come from his labour on the farm; with his earnings he may buy a team of oxen, and in time work his farm into order; he has nothing to lose; he has everything to gain,

and with steady industry he raises himself above his former level, and makes a home for his children in the new country.

Lastly, let us consider the position of a man with capital and with a knowledge of stock, who goes in for ranching. He takes up a homestead and builds house and stables, and then commences to stock his ranche. He buys

100 cows at \$35 each	—	\$3,500	or	£700
and 20 mares at \$60 each	—	\$1,200	or	£240
		Total	\$4,700	or £940

He cannot expect a return from these for three years, but in the meantime he may go in for pigs and sheep, which bring in a fair percentage in a short time.

At the end of three years he has on his ranche, with good luck, beside the original stock,

100 two-year-old cattle	worth \$30 each	—	\$3,000
100 yearlings	worth \$20 each	—	\$2,000
100 calves	worth \$12 each	—	\$1,200
say 15 two-year-old colts	worth \$50 each	—	\$ 750
say 15 yearling colts	worth \$35 each	—	\$ 525
say 15 foals	worth \$20 each	—	\$ 300

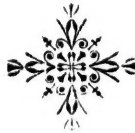
Total \$7,775 or £1,555

He has no rent to pay; the feeding grounds in summer and the hay for winter cost him nothing. Thus, at the end of three years, his investment of £940 has increased in value to £1,555, from which must be deducted several small expenditures. His stock is continually increasing.

and from a herd of 100 cows he may, in a few years, raise up an extensive ranche. If he has a family his sons can do most of the work, but if such should not be the case, he must hire cowboys at the rate of \$20 or \$25 a month.

Therefore, it will be seen that ranching is by far the most profitable branch of farming, and, provided the capital is forthcoming, can be made a pleasant as well as a remunerative occupation, though a new settler must be prepared at first to pay for his experience.

For Canada, and especially the West, there is undoubtedly a great prospect; but it will take much time and money before the whole of this vast country is settled up, and the western prairies are reclaimed from their wild state, to form one of the most prosperous countries in the world.



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